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THE LIVES OF THE PRESIDENTS

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON

JOHN TYLER

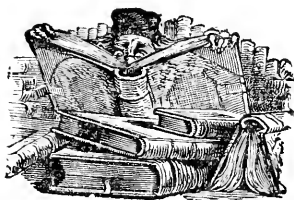
AND

JAMES KNOX POLK

BY

WILLIAM O. STODDARD

*Author of "George Washington," "John Adams and Thomas Jefferson,"
"Madison, Monroe, and John Quincy Adams," "Jackson and
Van Buren," "Ulysses S. Grant," etc.*



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WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON.

NINTH PRESIDENT.

BY WILLIAM O. STODDARD.

CHAPTER I.

*A Patriotic Ancestry—Boyhood in Stirring Times—
Going to College—Studying Medicine—Stories of
the Indian Wars—Deciding to be a Soldier—Com-
missioned by President Washington.*

IN the notable year 1774 the Virginia House of Burgesses took upon itself the character of a State Convention and elected seven delegates to the Continental Congress. This body of patriotic legislators was to meet in Philadelphia, and was to do a great deal more and better work than anybody dreamed of beforehand. Thomas Jefferson knew all the Virginia delegates, and said of them that they had been selected remarkably well. They were representative men, he said, and not one of them was a more perfect representative of the people than was big, burly, bluff Ben Harrison. He was a planter in moderate circumstances, his planta-

tion being at a place called Berkeley, on the James River, in Charles City County, about twenty-five miles below Richmond. He was a brother-in-law of Peyton Randolph, who was made first President of Congress, and he was related by marriage and otherwise to several of the leading families of the Virginia colony. Ben Harrison was no royalist or aristocrat, however, for he was a direct descendant of brave Colonel Harrison, a distinguished officer of the army which Oliver Cromwell led for the Parliament and against the King. It had been very natural that when Benjamin, not yet twenty-one, was sent to the House of Burgesses, he should at once begin to distinguish himself by a course of outspoken colonial patriotism which resulted in his becoming Speaker of the House, and afterward in his going to the rebel Congress as one of its most zealous members. He very narrowly missed being made President of Congress when Peyton Randolph died, but he insisted upon withdrawing in favor of John Hancock, of Massachusetts, in order to promote harmony between the Northern and Southern delegates. By his exertions Hancock was unanimously elected, but he, with a very reasonable diffidence, hesitated about accepting the difficult and dangerous eminence thrust upon him. Ben Harrison settled the matter by picking up the new President in his own brawny arms and placing him bodily in the chair of office, remarking :

“ We will show Mother Britain how little we care for her by making a Massachusetts man our President, whom she has excluded from pardon by public proclamation.”

There are many anecdotes extant illustrating the character of Ben Harrison, and the high esteem in which he was held by the best men of his country. His children were almost sure to inherit, with his good name, strong characteristics of head and heart. His third and youngest son, WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON, born at Berkeley, February 9th, 1773, was but a baby in the cradle when the Continental Congress met. Little William was three years old, however, when his father, on June 10th, 1776, as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, reported to Congress the resolution declaring the independence of the British colonies.

Those were stirring days for the country people of the Old Dominion. From the Western frontier came terrible tales, season after season, concerning the murderous doings of the savages. From the Carolinas and Georgia floated up endless rumors and reports of the wavering struggle there, which seemed to end at last in defeat for the cause of liberty. From the North, more frequently and more authentically came tidings of the long and seemingly disastrous campaigns of Washington's army. The Virginia coast was threatened continually by hovering fleets and cruisers, but no very serious damage was done, after the burning of Norfolk, in 1775, until the closing weeks of the year 1780. With the first days of the new year, January 3d, 1781, Benedict Arnold landed his raiders at Westover, only a short ride from Berkeley, and all the James River plantations were in peril. More British and more Hessians arrived a little later, and

there were larger fleets along the coast, while the army under Lord Cornwallis came pouring northward over the Carolina border to coop itself up in Yorktown and be captured by General Washington.

During all the years of the war, and even later, there were many privations to be endured by all Americans. Foreign importations were practically cut off, only the very rich being able to pay for the few costly luxuries which escaped the British blockade. Such families as that of patriotic Ben Harrison were also continually called upon to deny themselves in every possible manner, that they might give to the cause of independence. Whatever and whoever were the other teachers of William Henry Harrison's boyhood, there were great lessons to be learned in such a school of patriotism and self-sacrifice, and he learned them well, as he was yet to prove.

There were books at Berkeley, and there were competent instructors in its neighborhood. So good a use was made of them by the boy-patriot that he was prepared for college at a very early age. There is no perfect record of the precise date of his entrance at Hampden-Sidney College nor of the length of his stay. That he had been a studious lad and was now regarded as somewhat bookish is well attested. When he afterward turned his attention to the study of medicine, his father's friends and his own declared the choice eminently fitting, not only on account of the student's marked ability, but by reason of his great natural kindness and gentleness of character. There was nothing in his ap-

pearance which suggested that he had in him the material for one of the most successful Indian fighters of the American frontier. He was but sixteen when Washington became President, in 1789, but it was a time when the very few educated young men of the new Republic matured early. On the death of his father he had been placed under the guardianship of Robert Morris, the celebrated financier, who had high hope for his bright young ward's success in the medical profession.

There was a change in course of preparation, however. All the years of young Harrison's life had made him familiar with tales of Indian warfare, but the terrible record now grew darker. The peace with England, formally declared in 1783, was of a sadly imperfect nature. On land or sea it was at times but little better than a condition of mitigated hostilities, sure to lead at last to an open rupture. Along the Northern frontier and the shores of the great lakes the British retained possession of several fortified posts within the territory of the United States. They had no sufficient pretext for holding these places, but one important reason for so doing was that each was a centre of profitable trade with the red men and of influence over them. By means of the garrisons and of agencies employed through their commanders and the fur-traders, the old British domination over many tribes even increased rather than diminished. It was for the interest of the British fur trade that a state of hostilities, which British agents had created during the war for independence, should continue indefinitely after the

separate national existence of the United States had been acknowledged.

The savage tribes claimed also to be independent nations, and had but a faint perception of the political idea that they lived inside of another nation. They listened readily to traders and agents who brought presents from the British power, to which they had so long been friendly. On the other hand, the treaties which they from time to time entered into with the United States "Long Knives" were quickly rendered worthless by the fact that a sort of retaliatory frontier war went on almost without intermission. The state of affairs grew worse and worse. The western borders of Pennsylvania and the new settlements in what is now Ohio suffered direful ravages. It was estimated that between the peace in 1783 and the beginning of the year 1791, not less than two thousand horses were stolen by the Indian raiders, and fifteen hundred men, women, and children were murdered or carried captives into the wilderness.

The Northern Indian tribes most dreaded at this period were the Six Nations, in New York and beyond, who, with the Delawares, in Ohio, were sometimes fairly peaceable; the Hurons, or Wyandots, along the southern shore of Lake Erie; the Shawnees, who occupied Northern Ohio; and the Chippewas, Ottawas, and Pottawattamies, of what is now Michigan. Other tribes were heard of from time to time, however, and the state of affairs was almost as bad in the regions south of the Ohio as it was in the Northwestern Territory itself.

No census was ever taken of these Indians, but their warriors were known to number several thousands, led by capable chiefs, and well supplied with arms and ammunition by the British traders. One of the first duties of Washington's administration was to make an effort for the protection of the frontier. The effort was made, but resulted in a succession of military disasters, which increased the pride and arrogance of the savages, while it impressed upon most white men an exaggerated estimate of the number and prowess of the men of the woods. It was not easy to obtain recruits for the army because of the general dread of service upon the frontier. The tide of westward progress threatened to cease or at least to suffer a prolonged and injurious check.

The effect of all this terrible news was very remarkable upon the mind of the mild-mannered medical student, for he shortly announced his determination to enter the army. Mr. Morris opposed the unlooked-for change of purpose with much persistency, and went to consult the President as to the best means of counteracting it. So promising a young doctor ought not to be sent out, he said, to lose his scalp in the backwoods. George Washington thought differently. He was himself one of the best Indian fighters in the country, and was a capital judge of the kind of men required for that peculiar service. He had been a lifelong friend of Ben Harrison, and understood the sterling patriotism which bade the son of such a man volunteer for perilous duty. He overruled the objections of the great

banker, and, in April, 1791, he caused a commission to be issued to William Henry Harrison as Ensign in the First Regiment, United States Artillery. This command was at that date stationed at Fort Washington, in the heart of the Indian country, on the site of the present city of Cincinnati.

CHAPTER II.

A Boy-Officer—St. Clair's Defeat—A Trip through the Woods—Public Despondency—The Legion of the United States—Mad Anthony—Harrison's Temperance Lecturers—The Indian War.

IT is not easy to estimate correctly the change involved, in the year 1791, in abandoning the quiet career of a physician for that of a soldier in the Ohio River country. All the friends and connections of young Harrison—George Washington, apparently, alone excepted—had urged him strenuously to give up his wildly romantic notion. Even the slenderness and seeming delicacy of his bodily frame were urged against him, but his will was immovably fixed, although his natural modesty was little short of excessive diffidence. He joined his regiment at Fort Washington early in the autumn of 1791, and it was not long before one of General St. Clair's veterans wrote home concerning him :

“ I would as soon have thought of putting my wife into the army as this boy, but I have been out with him, and I find that those smooth cheeks are on a wise head and that slight form is almost as tough as my own weather-beaten carcass.”

There had been no effeminating influences in the life of a Virginia planter's son during the trying, stirring years which began with 1773. Every occu-

pation and recreation out of doors, and the current of news and of conversation, had been of a kind to strengthen any healthy, bodily and mental, constitution, and the young ensign had kept himself singularly free from bad habits of every description.

The Western army, at the time of his receiving his commission, was under the command of General St. Clair, a Revolutionary veteran of high reputation, to whom Washington had entrusted the important undertaking of inflicting merited chastisement upon the defiant tribes of the Ohio country. What was then deemed a considerable force had been given him, and with it the most urgent instructions to "guard against surprise." On November 1st, 1791, however, he and his army suffered both surprise and defeat, nearly six hundred men and officers perishing, and one of Harrison's first lessons concerning the true nature of the military career he had chosen was received when the shattered remnants of the routed army came straggling into Fort Washington.

His first duties were those of garrison life in an enemy's country, and were calculated to impress upon him lessons of watchfulness; but before long he was ordered to command the escort of a train of pack-horses on a perilous journey of thirty miles through the wilderness to Fort Hamilton. Trustworthy officers must indeed have been scarce when such a duty could have been assigned to one so young and so lacking in experience, but it was performed in a manner which drew upon him the notice of the general who was appointed to command the army in place of St. Clair.

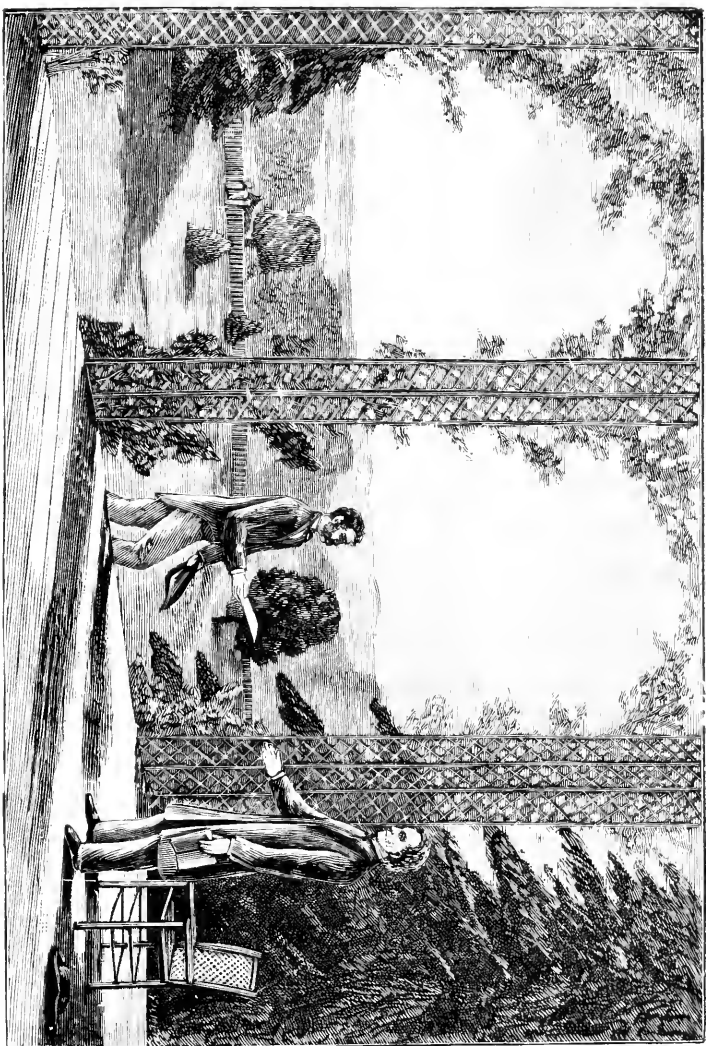
The defeat and massacre of the force from which so much had been expected deepened the feeling of horror with which the whole nation regarded the war with the Indians. Newspaper writers and even legislators declared that it was a mere waste of men and money to send troops to be butchered in the woods. There were sharp expressions of dissatisfaction with the administration and with its management of affairs upon the frontier.

No other man had felt more intensely the disaster to St. Clair than had Washington himself, and he determined that its evil effects should be thoroughly remedied. It was necessary to organize a new and stronger army and to plan a more extended campaign. The new force received the name of the Legion of the United States, and consisted of five thousand one hundred and twenty non-commissioned officers and privates, with suitable staff and line officers. The whole was divided into four sub-legions, under four brigadier-generals, with Major-General Anthony Wayne in chief command. There were those who questioned the safety of any men commanded by Mad Anthony Wayne, and they were partly right; but Washington, with better knowledge of him, questioned still more the safety of any men, white or red, who might be opposed to him. He was really a very prudent as well as very impetuous leader.

General Wayne received his instructions from the President, through the Secretary of War, May 2d, 1792, with the assurance that "another defeat would be inexpressibly ruinous." In order to avoid

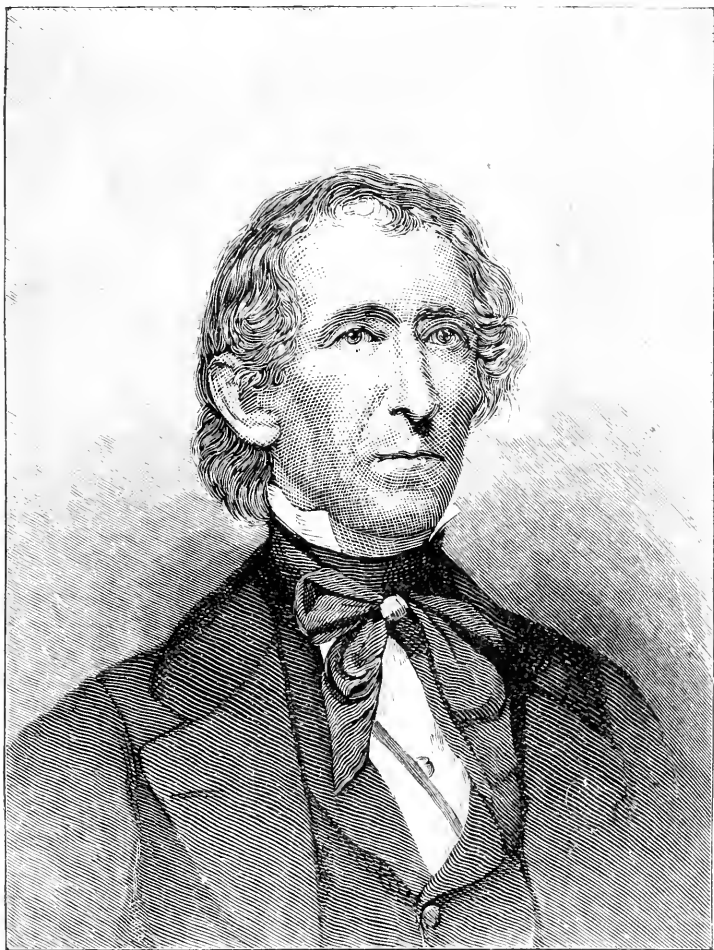
disaster, it was necessary to organize success and to turn bodies of uncommonly raw and timid recruits into soldiers. All sorts of fellows brought up in the older settlements were to be prepared for the duty of facing warriors thoroughly trained in forest warfare, accustomed to win victories, and sure to be well armed and well commanded. The army rendezvoused at Pittsburg in the Summer of 1792, and General Wayne toiled incessantly for the perfection of its organization, drill, and discipline. The men, even after gathering in the camp of instruction, were so infected with dread of the Indians that desertions were numerous, and sentries would abandon their posts upon purely imaginary alarms. Wayne took a wise course for increasing their confidence in themselves, for he made each company a school of rifle practice and of instruction in all the arts and wiles of savage warfare. At the same time, it was important to Ensign Harrison that he was to see his first fighting under a general who taught his cavalry to rely upon the sabre and his infantry to trust the bayonet, determining to meet the enemy hand to hand.

The army wintered at a fortified camp, called Legionville, twenty-two miles below Pittsburg, and when Spring returned the raw recruits had become accustomed to the use of arms, had acquired confidence in themselves, and were ready for active service. On April 30th, 1793, the camp was abandoned, and the entire force went down the Ohio River in boats to Fort Washington. The enemy had been within striking distance of them all winter,



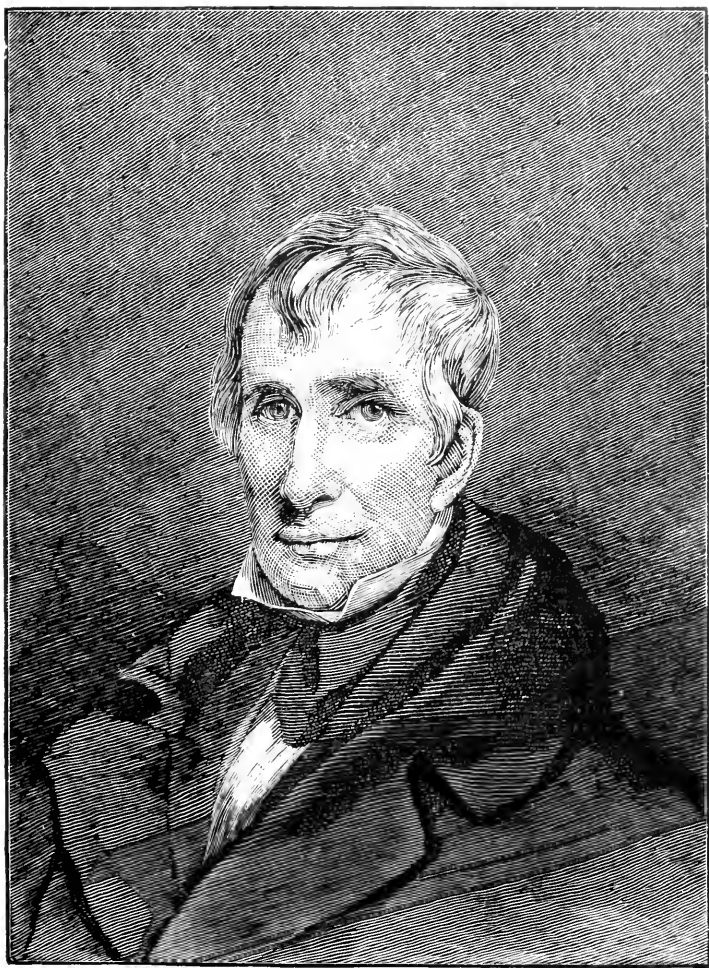
TYLER RECEIVING THE NEWS OF HARRISON'S DEATH.





PORTRAIT OF JOHN TYLER.

1



PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON.



but there had been no fighting of any importance, and now all that part of the Legion of the United States under Wayne's immediate command was ordered into the woods to find the Indians.

Already, in 1792, Ensign Harrison's uniform good conduct had procured his promotion to the rank of lieutenant, and he had ceased to be regarded as a mere boy. He had, moreover, learned one important lesson of life which was more than military and which made its good mark upon his whole career. He had been advised by Washington himself, his father's friend, against the prevailing vice of intemperance. General Wayne had repeated the good counsel. In camp and fort there had been only too sad and disgusting a succession of object lessons to enforce the warnings of the Father of his Country and of wise Mad Anthony. Drunken officers, drunken soldiers, and drunken Indians joined in convincing Harrison of the danger of beginning to drink. He therefore determined never to begin, and maintained his character for perfect sobriety in spite of all temptations. There was solid strength of principle in the boy-officer who could do that in the hard-drinking days of the old frontier wars.

General Wayne had not spent all of his time with his men at Pittsburg or at Legionville. In March, 1792, he had held a great council at Fort Washington with the chiefs of the Six Nations, headed by Cornplanter, and with some chiefs of other tribes. The red men had arrogantly demanded that the Ohio River should be a boundary line beyond which the white men should not come. They claimed all

the land beyond that barrier, and it was impossible for the United States Government to acknowledge their shadowy, uncertain ownership. During the Summer of that year another council was held, at Sandusky, with no better results, for the demands of the Indians grew rather than diminished, in spite of the efforts of some of their wiser chiefs.

While Wayne did his best to obtain peace without fighting, he was getting his force into good condition for rapid movements, and his younger officers had work to do which kept them in daily training for the sharp campaign before them. In July about a thousand mounted volunteers came up from Kentucky. They were men of the kind that afterward followed Andrew Jackson through the Creek and Seminole War, and were a capital re-enforcement. In October General Wayne advanced about eighty miles along the southwestern branch of the Miami River and fortified a camp which he called Greenville. All the while there were opportunities for hard service and exposure, but no diaries were kept, and the skirmishes and individual adventures are almost altogether unrecorded. On December 23d, 1793, in midwinter, a strong detachment of infantry and artillery was sent to occupy the ground upon which St. Clair had been defeated, and Lieutenant Harrison joined the expedition as a volunteer. There was no fighting, but the bones of the dead were buried, the cannon abandoned by the routed army were recovered, and a fort was built which received the name of Fort Recovery. In the general order of thanks for the excellent manner in which

so perilous a duty had been performed, Lieutenant Harrison received especial mention.

The Kentucky volunteers went home because there seemed no prospect of any fighting for them to do that season, and the Indians were evidently unprepared to cope at once with so strong a column as that under Wayne. They were watching it closely, however, and now and then found an opportunity to make themselves felt. For instance, one detachment escorting a provision train was attacked so suddenly that two officers and thirteen men were killed at the outset, and the remainder escaped only by hard running.

There were other skirmishes here and there and constant alarms among the border settlements, in testimony that the hostile chiefs had no thought of peace or of surrendering their claim to the disputed hunting-grounds. Through the Spring of 1794 they continued to prepare themselves, stimulated and aided by the white enemies of the United States in every British fort and trading station along the Northern frontier. On June 30th, 1794, a combined force of about fifteen hundred Indians, British, and Canadians made an attack upon Fort Recovery, but were repulsed with loss. All the while, nevertheless, the formerly harassed American border enjoyed increasing security. Settlements grew in the rear of Wayne's army. His forts and fortified camps became centres of trade and of future population. The army acquired an almost unbounded confidence in their leader, and a general acquaintance also with their regimental officers and with each other. This

fact became of political importance in after years, for nine men out of every ten who served under Wayne became settlers upon the lands they rescued from the savages. When the time came for veteran soldiers to vote as citizens, they knew very well how to select their civil leaders from among their old military commanders.

CHAPTER III.

A Forward Movement—Battle of the Miami—Studying the Indians—Captain Harrison—In Command of Fort Washington—Marriage—Death of Wayne—Harrison Secretary of Northwestern Territory—Delegate to Congress.

IN July, 1794, the mounted riflemen of Kentucky came again to re-enforce the Legion of the United States. General Wayne decided that the time had arrived for his long-intended dash. He made a swift march of seventy miles to Grand Glaise, and built Fort Defiance at the confluence of the Miami of the Lakes with the Auglaize.

The red warriors were gathering fast in this vicinity, with the British post and garrison of Detroit as their military base of operations. It is a well-established fact that when the time came for Wayne to strike his blow he found Canadian militia acting with the Indians, but it is probable that the uniforms worn by the two kinds of warriors were much alike. At all events, his forward movement discovered the enemy, about two thousand strong, waiting for him in a well-chosen position behind timber, very near Detroit. The battle of the Miami followed. It was fought August 20th, 1794, and it was won in a manner peculiarly belonging to the genius of General Wayne. The lurking savages had

no opportunity to employ their customary tactics. They were charged upon in their coverts with what seemed reckless rashness, and were bayoneted or scattered in a fashion entirely new to them. The victory was won swiftly and thoroughly, and a lasting lesson was given to the warriors and chiefs who had so haughtily refused all terms of peace.

The part taken by Harrison in the battle of the Miami offers the first clear indication of the estimation in which he was held as an officer. It is almost sure that Washington asked Wayne to keep an eye upon the son of Ben Harrison, but it is yet more certain that stern old Anthony was not a man to be guilty of favoritism. It was because of capacity and good conduct, therefore, that Lieutenant Harrison had been chosen as one of the General's aides. In the battle of the Miami he was under constant and great exposure, and won the marked approbation of General Wayne, who said of him in despatches to the War Department :

"My faithful and gallant aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Harrison, rendered the most essential service by communicating my orders in every direction, and by his conduct and bravery exciting the troops to press for victory."

That was high praise to be earned in so hot a fight by a young fellow of twenty-one who had been deemed of so gentle and retiring a nature as to be fitted only for a very mild-mannered physician. It was afterward discovered that the men themselves agreed with the General, and had formed an excellent opinion of the dashing aide-de-camp.

With the battle of the Miami Lieutenant Harrison may fairly be said to have finished his apprenticeship in frontier warfare. He had assisted in building forts of the rough patterns called for in repelling savages, and had seen a great deal of watchful garrison duty. He had led small escort parties of men upon perilous expeditions through forests infested by the enemy. He had toiled with his commander in the drill and discipline of raw recruits, obtaining much military knowledge for his own future uses while teaching others. He had learned the methods and the difficulties of moving and supplying troops in the wilderness. Now, at last, under the eyes of General Wayne, he had distinguished himself in a hot engagement of great importance. He had fully justified his instinctive choice of a career, as well as the opinion formed of him by Washington.

Hardly was the battle over before an opportunity was given to General Wayne for something approaching statesmanship. Had he been the hot-headed, reckless soldier so many deemed him, he would surely have come to an open collision with the unwise British commander of the fort at Detroit. If he had been unduly elated by the victory he had gained, he might even have been tempted to capture the post, and all the current diplomacy between the United States and Great Britain would thereby have been thrown into disastrous confusion. The General kept his temper, behaving with commendable firmness and moderation, and at the same time his aide-de-camp was given a fine opportunity to study the Northern boundary question.

The beaten red men disappeared in the wilderness, a large part of their force engaged in the battle escaping into British territory, and there was no more heavy fighting during the year 1794. On the first day of the new year, 1795, the several tribes began negotiations for peace, and a treaty was soon afterward concluded at Greenville, by which a vast tract of the territory they had fought for was forever relinquished to the United States. It was part of the region of country which at no distant day was to have William Henry Harrison for its first civil magistrate and ruler, but his share in the ceremonies and discussions relating to the making of the treaty was altogether that of a thoughtful subordinate. Still, from his position upon the staff of the commanding general and with his advantages of early political training, he must have acquired at this time much of the intimate knowledge of all the negotiations, agreements, and transfers made on either side which he afterward displayed and which were on many occasions of so great a value to the country.

Now, as in all the previous and subsequent conferences between General Wayne and the tribes, year after year, in fort or camp, chiefs and distinguished warriors came and went at their will, and in after years it was discovered that they had been carefully studied and their character wonderfully well understood by the young officer who assisted in receiving them at headquarters. He formed acquaintanceships and even friendships among them, winning their esteem in a manner

which afterward rendered him the best Indian Commissioner ever sent out by the United States Government.

So thoughtful and intelligent a devotion to duty was by no means as common as it should have been. It was sufficiently rare to continually attract especial attention on the part of watchful superiors. With the close of the campaign the lieutenant received his next step, and became a captain of artillery, and with the promotion came a combination of duties hardly consistent with the present rules of the service. General Wayne retained him as a member of his own staff at the same time that he placed him in command of the important post of Fort Washington.

There was one peculiar addition to the responsibilities of Captain Harrison, for he received orders to watch and report all movements in what was then Spanish Louisiana, the vast, almost unknown Southwest and West, which the men of Tennessee and Kentucky were also watching, almost rifle in hand.

By what was known as the Jay Treaty, concluded in 1794 between the United States and Great Britain, the latter surrendered its obnoxious possession of its forts upon American soil. The duty of receiving and occupying the several posts was assigned by General Wayne to Captain Harrison, and was performed satisfactorily. The Indian tribes obtained from the fact of this transfer a lesson very nearly as important as that which had been given them at the Miami by the bayonets of the

Legion and the rifles of the Kentucky volunteers. They learned that the "Long Knives," as they called the United States settlers, had come to stay, and that the English had given up any purpose of preventing their coming. All the hurtful fictions of the jealous Canadian fur-traders were at once destroyed, and there seemed likely to be less difficulty in keeping the peace of the frontier.

The line of border settlements, however, was no longer where it had been, and the Indians sullenly noted that the lands they had resigned were rapidly ceasing to be hunting-grounds. It was a constant cause of irritation to their minds to find more cabins and clearings among the woods season after season, for the savage idea of what rights might be conveyed by a land-title was necessarily vague. As the forest trees should come down and the cornfields widen, there would surely come times and places for renewed collisions between the new race and the old. Among the other evidences that what might be called "the army of peace," as distinguished from Wayne's Legion, was making an advance movement, had been the increasing number of pioneer families, women and children, as well as men, who braved the perils and hardships of the Western wilderness. The young commander of Fort Washington was a welcome guest in every home, and in one of them he shortly found his part of the great romance of human life, for it was not a great while after he received his captain's commission before he married the daughter of Hon. John Cleves Symmes, the founder of the Miami settlement and one of the

United States judges of the Territory. She was a young lady of more than ordinary worth, well fitted to be his companion and helpmeet in the long career of toilsome usefulness which was now rapidly opening to him. The high character and position in the new community which he had already attained received at once an additional strength, and he had allied himself by a new and permanent tie to the pioneers of the Western border.

Another year went by, and the warm friendship between the commanding general and his aide-de-camp was severed by the death of General Wayne. There were many reasons why the army, as at that time constituted and managed, offered no adequate or assured career. It was subject to altogether too many changes at what seemed to be the caprice of inconsiderate legislation. Another and more promising field invited the universally popular captain of artillery. He resigned his military commission, and was at once appointed Secretary of the Northwestern Territory, being also, *ex-officio*, Lieutenant-Governor. In the frequent prolonged absences of Governor St. Clair he therefore became acting Governor. A wide range of duties devolved upon him, the efficient discharge of which called for precisely the kind and quality of preparatory schooling which he had been giving himself from the day when he joined his regiment at Fort Washington.

No other man had been better situated for becoming personally acquainted with the widely scattered inhabitants, and few possessed in a higher degree the born capacity for winning their good

will. Perfect frankness of manner, genuine kindness of heart, unfailing cheerfulness and readiness to extend a helping hand, continued to draw toward him the affectionate esteem of all whom his official duties brought into communication with him.

To strangers in a strange land, a land so very rough and so full of all perplexities to new-comers, it was of vast importance to find a man in office who met them with encouragement and sympathy, and whose wide and accurate information enabled him to answer almost any question they were troubled with.

In the next year, 1798, the Territory was declared entitled, by its increase of population, to a delegate in Congress, and when an election was held, in 1799, the almost unanimous choice of the voters fell upon William Henry Harrison. It was a popular and legislative verdict confirming remarkably the good opinion of George Washington and Anthony Wayne.

The first delegate of the Northwestern Territory took his seat in the Sixth Congress in December, 1799, at the age of twenty-six years. He was young to have attained so marked a distinction. It was true that he had been favored by circumstances of birth and of friends of official position, but it was equally true that he had fairly earned the public confidence so emphatically bestowed upon him.

CHAPTER IV.

Land Reform—Harrison made Governor of the Indiana Territory — Vast Power — Miscellaneous Duties—Upper Louisiana Added—The Indians and Fire-water—Tecumseh and the Prophet—A Libel Suit.

IN the political canvass which led to his election to Congress, Harrison had taken a distinct position before the people of the Territory. He proposed a reform in the laws regulating the disposal of the public lands, and the settlers were in perfect accord with him. They were poor, and the laws had been apparently prepared for the benefit of the rich. It was allowable to grant or sell tracts of four thousand acres in extent, and moneyed speculators obtaining them were able to bar the way of actual settlement, improvement, and cultivation.

Soon after taking his seat the new delegate offered and advocated a resolution providing for a committee of investigation, with instructions to report upon the defects of the land laws. So clearly were the existing abuses set forth that the resolution was adopted, and the impression made by its author was declared in his appointment as chairman of the committee. It was the first, and is, perhaps, the only instance of such a trust being conferred upon a territorial delegate. Fully prepared beforehand, it was not long before he reported a bill which worked

a revolution in the management of the public lands of the United States. The entire country west of the Pennsylvania border to the shore of the Pacific Ocean owes much of its facility of settlement and the wise distribution of its area among many, instead of its absorption by a smaller number of owners, to the clear-headed statesmanship of the young representative of the Northwestern Territory. His bill provided for a reduction in the amount of land purchasable in one body to alternate tracts of three hundred and twenty acres and one hundred and sixty acres each—that is, of half and quarter sections not adjoining each other. The intermediate half and quarter sections were duly guarded with reference to their falling into the hands of actual settlers. The report accompanying the bill exhibited marked ability, and brought increased reputation to its author. The management of the bill before the House of Representatives was left entirely in his hands. The entire land speculating interest opposed it vigorously, and was, of course, able to bring a powerful political combination to bear. Harrison proved himself capable of meeting them at every point, and his proposed law passed the House in its original shape. The battle of the speculators was then fought over again in the Senate, and Harrison could not be there. After a protracted contest there was at last a committee of conference of the two Houses of Congress, and a compromise between them was agreed upon by which alternate whole sections, of six hundred and forty acres each, could be sold for cash.

The importance of the subject under discussion and the severity of the protracted legislative contest attracted the attention of the entire country, and made Harrison's name more widely and favorably known than were those of some men who had been long in Congress. His next proposition gained him even greater popularity, for it was a new law changing the manner of dealing with land warrants issued to soldiers for military services. He was no demagogue, but he found himself in the somewhat dramatic position of the "soldier's friend," and not many men cared to oppose his measure. It became a law almost as a matter of course.

It was evident that the settlers of the Northwestern Territory had selected the right man to represent them, and he was now sure of being consulted and listened to upon all questions connected with Western affairs. At the same time, full accounts of the manner in which he was discharging his trust were sure to be carried to his constituents. From settlement to settlement and from cabin to cabin went the story of the new land laws and how they had been obtained, and all the choppers in the backwoods were ready to vote or work for the author and advocate of those laws. Their rights and interests, even the homes of many, had been at stake, and they had been apparently helpless to protect themselves. It was a grand thing to find that they had been so ably cared for and defended. Mr. Harrison's advocacy of the land reform and the manner and success with which he had conducted it placed him apparently in the front rank of the

younger politicians of the country. Henry Clay and Daniel Webster were each in the bright beginning of their respective careers, but neither could be said to have yet distinguished himself more remarkably than had the new Western delegate, the former aide-de-camp of General Wayne. Andrew Jackson had served a brief but almost silent, pointless term in Congress, and had returned to Tennessee to be a judge of the Territorial Supreme Court. He seemed to have small prospect of ever becoming prominent in national politics, for nobody could foretell the Creek War or the battle of New Orleans.

John Quincy Adams, although but thirty-two years of age, was already United States Minister at Berlin, after serving a remarkably short apprenticeship in diplomacy ; but he was seemingly removed from all opportunity of acquiring home popularity. Martin Van Buren was yet a mere boy of seventeen, beginning to read law and make small stump-speeches in and around Kinderhook, N. Y.

After taking a careful survey of the lists of promising young men, there would have been sound reason for saying that not one held in his hands a better apparent opportunity for future eminence than did Harrison. If he had remained in Congress he might still have been kept before the people, and his name might have been heard as often in the political and legislative contests of the next dozen of years as were those of others who became founders and leaders of parties and who associated their names with the great questions which from time to time or continuously stirred up the country.

It was not to be so, for Mr. Harrison was about to be more completely taken out of the general political, or, rather, partisan field of action than if he had been sent to explore Europe. At the same time, he was to be placed where he would surely create a new party to some degree independent of ordinary party lines, and as completely his own personal following as that of Andrew Jackson or Henry Clay.

In the year 1800, while the great political campaign was in progress which resulted in making Thomas Jefferson President, the Northwestern Territory was divided. A region including what is now Ohio retained the old name. All the great wilderness westward and northwestward became the Territory of Indiana.

Prior to the division there had been a movement in favor of making Harrison Governor of the entire Northwestern Territory, but he had himself opposed it, in favor of the veteran General St. Clair. Now, from every settlement of the new Territory of Indiana petitions of the people poured in upon President Adams demanding the appointment of Harrison as their governor, and the appointment was duly made just before the close of the President's term of office.

There was no danger of any change by the new administration, although the party affiliation of the young governor had not been with Thomas Jefferson. By family tradition, perhaps, and by early association and training, rather than by anything approaching partisanship, Harrison had been a mild

Federalist, so mild that he could afterward deny ever having been one at all. Nearly all the officers of Washington's army had at one time regarded Hamiltonian Federalism as a species of regulation duty, even when they took small pains to inquire what sort of thing it might be. With many of them it stood only for social respectability and for a blind enmity to the kind of French Radicalism represented by that very dangerous fiddler, Thomas Jefferson. It was to President Jefferson's honor that he did not look too carefully into old partisan affiliations.

If, however, there might otherwise have been any doubt in the matter, the unanimity of the people's voice removed all question from the mind of a chief magistrate honestly disposed to meet their wishes.

There was no suggestion of disturbing Mr. Harrison, and the young but really experienced governor entered upon the discharge of his duties in the year 1801, leaving behind him at Washington a brief but notable record of legislative usefulness.

No adequate idea of Governor Harrison's new field of labor can be obtained without consulting a map. In all that vast region beyond the boundary line of the State of Ohio there were then but three considerable settlements. One of these was called Clark's Grant, very nearly opposite Louisville, Kentucky. The next, five hundred miles distant, was at Vincennes, on the Wabash, in what is now Indiana, and was made the capital of the Territory. The third, two hundred miles from Vincennes, was the string of French villages along the Mississippi,

from Kaskaskia to Cabokia, in what is now Missouri.

Immigrants from the Atlantic States were beginning to venture into the very promising prairie and forest lands of the Indiana Territory, but the savages still claimed by far the greater part as their own, and there were ominous rumors of their purposes. There was, in fact, still a chronic state of predatory war with some tribes. The scattered white population of permanent residents was largely French, well disposed and peaceable, but the Indian traders were for the greater part British or Canadians, full of bitterness against the American advancement, which was surely depriving them of their trade. There was much to be dreaded, therefore, from their influence among several of the more powerful nations of red men.

Neither the French, the scattered pioneers, nor the savages possessed any capacity for representative self-government. Very wisely the United States did not force any absurd civic duties upon them. They were given a genuine "governor," with powers somewhat resembling those of an ancient Roman pro-consul. Governor Harrison was invested with one of the most extraordinary commissions in the history of the country. It was not exceeded by that which afterward grotesquely appointed Andrew Jackson to be at the same time American Governor and Spanish Captain-General of Florida, with a double set of laws.

The new republican institutions of Indiana Territory were to be fostered and developed under auto-

cratic power. The people had no voice whatever. Governor Harrison was commander of the territorial militia. He was also Indian Commissioner, Land Commissioner, sole legislator and law-giver. He had the power given him to adopt from the laws upon the statute-books of any of the States any and every law which in his judgment applied to the needs of the Territory. He appointed all magistrates and all other civil officers and all militia officers below the grade of general. It was his duty, and he was given authority to divide the country into counties and townships. He held the pardoning power. He was made judge of the merits of existing land grants, of which many were technically or otherwise defective. His decision as to these was made final, and his signature upon a title was a cure of all defects. With reference to all the Indian tribes, he was made the general agent and representative of the United States, in charge of treaties and treaty payments, and his correspondence with the Government at Washington relating to the vast mass of Indian affairs involved became one of the onerous burdens of his position.

On the acquisition of Louisiana, in 1803, all of Upper Louisiana, with dim boundaries except upon the east, was added to Governor Harrison's jurisdiction. How well the toilsome responsibilities had been carried out was at the same time witnessed by President Jefferson and by Congress. The first commissions, issued in 1801, had expired, and when new nominations as Governor and as Commissioner of Indian Affairs were sent by the President to the

Senate in 1803, the vote of confirmation was prompt and unanimous.

The duties of the latter office involved the disbursement of large sums of money in annuities, and the care and prudence with which that somewhat annoying trust was executed may appear from the fact that no breath of suspicion ever questioned the governor's accounts. At the same time, there were continually offered opportunities for the acquisition of wealth by judicious investments in land. Many of these might have been very properly made, in the opinion of upright men, but here appeared one of the distinguishing characteristics of Mr. Harrison. He was not content with actually being sensitively honorable in all relations, public and private. He was also keenly, almost morbidly sensitive to public opinion relating to his discharge of official duties. It was as if he feared to acquire property, lest some person should insinuate that he had obtained it by reason of advantages given him by his official place and power. It was a weakness, if such it can be called, which was as rare then as anything like it would be now.

The general administration of the affairs of the Territory was taken up by the governor with great energy. They involved long and perilous journeyings from place to place, on horseback through the woods or in boats, up and down rivers which carried more Indian canoes than any other kind of craft. Post after post and settlement after settlement required visitation, and everywhere a multiplicity of knotty questions awaited the arrival and action of

the man who gathered in his own hands so very many different kinds of power. The relations between the settlers and the red men presented an unceasing problem of great difficulty, for neither could be induced to abide by the terms of any treaty or by the requirements of the laws borrowed from the States.

Governor Harrison understood Indian character remarkably well and had great personal influence over many chiefs and warriors, as well as over the sturdy white pioneers. There was one element, however, common to all the tribes, a sort of savage patriotism, with which he could do little or nothing, and it was all the while fretting itself into a state of haughty discontent. It included, in each tribe and sub-tribe, the more fiery and warlike spirits, young braves like Tecumseh or his brother, Olliwachica, and the other scourges of the Kentucky border. In many respects this class of Indians, avowedly the implacable enemies of all palefaces, were the best of the Indians. They kept alive the ancient traditions and patriotic spirit of their people, and strove to prevent them from imitating and being ruined by the infectious vices of the white invaders. In this latter direction they had the strong sympathy and cordial co-operation of Governor Harrison. There was not a great deal that he could do, at first, to assist the few right-minded chiefs who were striving to check the ravages of intemperance, but he did all in his power. He labored hard all the while for the acquisition of a permanent state of peace, and the Indian traditions in his way, as strong almost as

religious belief, can best be illustrated by quoting the language of a Shawnee chief in a speech addressed to Governor Harrison at a great council held at Fort Wayne, in 1803. The points of the treaty proposed and under discussion included the confirmation of existing treaties and transfers of land. The chief said, as translated by the interpreter :

“The Master of Life was himself an Indian. He made the Shawnees before any others of the human race. They sprang from his brain. The Master of Life gave them the knowledge which he himself possessed. He placed them upon the great island, and all the other red people are descended from the Shawnees. He made the French and English out of his breast. The Dutch he made out of his feet. As for your Long Knives kind, he made them out of his hands. All those inferior races of men he made white and placed them beyond the great lake.

“The Shawnees were masters of the continent for many ages, using the knowledge which they had received from the Great Spirit in such a manner as to be pleasing to him and to secure their own happiness. In a great length of time, however, they became corrupt, and the Master of Life told them he would take away from them the knowledge they possessed and give it to the white people, to be restored when, by a return to good principles, they would deserve it.

“Many years after that they saw something white approaching their shores. At first they took it for a great bird, but they soon found it to be a monstrous canoe, filled with the very people who had obtained the knowledge which belonged to the Shawnees ; but they usurped their lands also. They pretended, indeed, to have purchased the lands, but the very goods they gave for them were more the property of the Indians than of the white people, because the knowledge which enabled them to manufacture these goods actually belonged to the Shawnees.

“These things will now have an end. The Master of Life is about to restore to the Shawnees both their knowledge and their rights, and he will trample the Long Knives under his feet.”

The red men believed themselves the superior race, and entertained no thought of entirely yielding to the palefaces and disappearing from the face of the land. The manifest fact that they were steadily receding was of itself sufficient to embitter them, inclining them to look with keen suspicion upon every overture for the kind of peace which seemed to wither them and strengthen their enemies.

They went away from every great council with narrower hunting-grounds and in a higher state of preparation for listening around their own council-fires to warlike arguments which made use of their traditions in appealing to their pride.

Treaties were made with tribe after tribe and with combinations of tribes, and in all of them Governor Harrison proved himself the wise friend of the red men while doing his duty as the appointed guardian of white interests. There was really no perfect peace with any tribe at any time, and his ability as a watchful military commander was all the while employed to prevent the skirmish line, as the advanced settlements might well be called, from becoming a general battle-ground.

When he first accepted the appointment offered him he declared that he would not consent to hold office a day longer than his administration should prove satisfactory to the people, and in that spirit he continued to serve. It was soon noted that he took small account of political party membership or of personal friendships in making his subordinate appointments. Even his enemies received commissions if they were in his opinion the right men for

the public services to be rendered. The vast power in his hands was faithfully, toilsomely exercised for the development as well as for the protection of the chaotic community under his charge. Immigration was steadily encouraged by such a policy, so carried out, but it was not until 1805 that he was able to obtain from Congress a law for the reorganization of the Territory. In that year, however, he received some relief from the burden he had been carrying. Provision was made for an election by the people of a territorial Legislature. This body also had the authority to name ten men, from whom Congress chose five, to act as the Council of the Territory, a sort of Upper House.

Nothing could be brought before the new territorial Legislature of greater importance than the proper management of their relations with the Indians, and in his first message the governor gave them a clear setting forth of his own views. They were urged to begin by the performance of their duty, as civilized white men, to the Indians, as ignorant savages. The United States law for the prevention of the sale of intoxicating liquor to the Indians was so defectively drawn as to be very nearly useless, and the governor eloquently appealed to the Legislature to take the matter up. He set before them the degraded condition of the tribes, among whom the soulless traders were permitted to carry unlimited rum. The poison was literally destroying them by hundreds, after plunging them in utter degradation. It was needful that the hand of the law should interfere.

Something was done by the Legislature, but not nearly enough, in response to the governor's appeal, and it seemed to be almost equally unavailing that in urging temperance upon the red men he had the active support of some of their own chiefs. His temperance movement, however, was shortly followed by another of a very different and remarkable nature, and which had tremendous consequences.

There were two sons of a Shawnee chief who were also half Cherokees, through their mother. Their names, Tecumseh and Olliwachica, or Elskawatawa, were famous, while yet they were young men, for their bloody exploits in feuds with other tribes and among the Kentucky and Northern settlements. They were pronounced enemies of all palefaces, and were opposed to the treaties by which the hunting-grounds of their race were surrendered. They at last formed a design for a general confederation of the Indian tribes to check the westward flood of white migration. The league was to include all, from the Hurons of the Lakes and the other Northern tribes, who were soon to be met in the field by Harrison, to the Red Stick Creeks, the Choctaws and Cherokees and Seminoles of the South, who were to be crushed by General Jackson.

During the year 1804, as nearly as can be ascertained, Olliwachica, "The fire that is moved from place to place," began to preach a reformed religion, based upon the ancient traditions. He had chosen, with deep sagacity, the best means for securing unity of action among so many jealous clans of savages. He was fully sustained by his

eloquent and warlike brother, Tecumseh, but the growth of the new movement was slow at first, for it demanded genuine reform of life. The Prophet, as he called himself, taught that the time was at hand for the restoration of the lost power of the red men, and that they must return to the manner of life enjoined upon them by the Great Spirit. They must put away whatever they had learned from the white men. They must drink no fire-water. Flint and steel must be put away, and the fire must not be permitted to go out in their lodges. They must dress like their red ancestors, and wear no article manufactured by the palefaces. They were to let no dogs live, and yet they were never to ill-treat a dog, for they were to live at peace among themselves, and were forbidden to strike man or woman or child or dog, or to lie or steal. They were not even to hurt their Indian enemies, but were to preserve all their energies for the great purpose of resisting the encroachments of the Long Knives.

The new religion met with great opposition at the outset, but it was preached with eloquence and energy from tribe to tribe. Chiefs who stood in its way too offensively were accused by the Prophet of witchcraft, and a number of them were murdered or disappeared without any account being given of where they had gone.

While all this was going on in the woods of the Indiana Territory great political changes had taken place in all the Eastern and Southern country. In 1803 Ohio was admitted as one of the States of the Union, while the acquisition of Louisiana acted as

a strong stimulus to the tide of immigration, which followed the course of the great rivers and seemed to shun the shores of the great lakes and the continually threatened Canadian border. President Jefferson had been re-elected, but the great wave of party enthusiasm which carried him was hardly felt in the backwoods. The young Republic was rapidly extending its treaty relations with European powers, but the settlers in their cabins neither knew nor cared much about it. Treaties with the tribes near them were of much more importance to all their known interests, and their hard-working governor was persistently seeking to bring these to something like a trustworthy condition. It was very remarkable that one man should have succeeded in accomplishing so much, at widely separated points, over so vast an area. He did not neglect his duties to the newly annexed territory beyond the Mississippi. When, in 1805, Upper Louisiana was separated from his jurisdiction, the citizens of St. Louis presented him with a formal vote of thanks for the manner in which he had served their interests. The officers of the militia organization also declared their satisfaction with his course, and the new territorial Legislature, at its first session, added its positive expression of approval. He had toiled among them with rare disinterestedness. When offered what would afterward have been a third part of the city of St. Louis as an inducement for employing his official influence to build up the infant municipality, he did what he honestly could for the local welfare, but refused to

accept the proffered reward, although its true character was perfectly covered under the form of a speculative land operation. His sensitiveness in official money transactions went yet further, for he refused to accept his lawful fees for issuing licenses to trade with the Indians. The amount rejected was somewhere between two and three thousand dollars, and was a perquisite which had been fairly earned by toils, exposures, perils, and by prudent administration of the licensing power.

There had been one good result of such scrupulous avoidance of all apparent occasion for calumny, and up to this time every evil tongue had spared him. There came a day, however, in 1810, when a person named McIntosh ventured to assert that Governor Harrison had cheated the Indians in a treaty concluded with them at Fort Wayne. Another man might have permitted that solitary detraction to pass unnoticed, but not so the somewhat thin-skinned governor. He at once brought suit against McIntosh before the Supreme Court of the Territory. There were three judges, and of these one left the bench in that case because he was a friend of the plaintiff, and another in like manner because he was a friend of the defendant. The trial began with one judge, but did not go far before the defendant's counsel gave it up and confined himself to a plea for mitigation of penalty. The jury failed to find any cause for mitigation. After an hour of deliberation they brought in a verdict for four thousand dollars damages, which was large indeed, considering the value of such a sum in a new coun-

try where there was almost no money at all. Judgment was declared, and the property of McIntosh was sold by the sheriff to satisfy it, but was bought in at the sale by an agent of the governor. Two thirds of it was at once returned to the penitent owner, and the other third was divided among the orphans of soldiers who had been killed in battle. The governor had protected his honor and had given a salutary public lesson upon the evil of groundless defamation, but he could not consent to put any part of the fine into his own pocket.

CHAPTER V.

Indian Treaties—Growth of the New Country—Correspondence with Tecumseh—The Council at Vincennes—The Indian View of the Land Question—Harrison's Intrepidity.

GOVERNOR HARRISON'S first appointment had been given him in compliance with petitions from the people of the frontier. His successive reappointments at the end of each term of office came to him in like manner by a species of unanimous popular election by petition, duly confirmed by the President and Senate. His popularity was such as simply to remove the idea of successful competition, although there were by no means lacking men whose ambition led them to covet a post so important and authority so great.

At the present day it would not be easy to find in a community of the older States one man who could give the names of the governors of the Territories of the United States. It was not so in a day when the only name such a person was required to remember was that of *the* governor of *the* Territory. Throughout the country everywhere the name of Governor Harrison had become associated and almost identified with territorial affairs and with the tangled story of Indian diplomacy. Whenever any letter or report of his came before Congress or

found its way into the press, it was noticed that his style was clear and vigorous, and it was well known that he was a gentleman of refined and elevated personal character. Although he adopted the simple manners and plain way of living of the pioneers for whom he was working, the impression given was that he carried with him little or none of the roughness which was supposed to be characteristic of Western political leaders.

While all this was true, and while the well-merited reputation was as wide as the nation, there was about it something dull and commonplace rather than brilliant.

The roughness of frontier life could be more plainly seen than could any of its other features. Its perils, its frequent adventures, its combats with and victories over wild beasts and wild men had not been put into print as yet by any novelist of the thousand who have since made border romance familiar to the minds of every civilized boy and girl. Therefore, although Governor Harrison was understood to be the right man to talk with Indians or to govern a wilderness, the general public had more to say about the brilliant statesmen in their own congressional districts, whose eloquence they had listened to and whose views upon the tariff and other public questions they were well acquainted with. Governor Harrison was himself a very good orator, and capable of making himself well understood by any audience he might address, provided, in the case of some of his most important and attentive audiences, he had a good interpreter.

As to these, the great councils of the Indian tribes, they were necessarily frequent, for the difficulties with the red men increased with the yearly increase in the number of settlers' cabins. There was a bitter spirit growing on both sides, the fruit of mutual wrongs and retaliations, and Governor Harrison was powerless to prevent either the causes or the consequences. His own life was more than once in extreme peril in the savage assemblies he attended. Only his iron firmness and the deep respect in which he was held had prevented his being tomahawked where he sat.

In the course of his long administration as Superintendent of Indian Affairs he negotiated no less than thirteen important treaties with the tribes. The Indian lands transferred are now settled, cultivated, dotted with villages towns, cities. They are States of the Union. The business of acquiring the vague and shadowy but important titles held by the wild hunters involved over eleven years of watchfulness and planning, accompanied by frequent journeyings and severe exposures. The rigidly conscientious public servant entrusted with the work was entitled to extra pay at the rate of six dollars per day and his expenses while actually engaged upon his duties as commissioner. So carefully did he pare away his accounts and separate the several kinds of duty and pay that his entire charges for the thirteen treaties and their accompanying services were only about five thousand dollars.

Beginning in 1804, the Indian Prophet Olliwachica and his brother Tecumseh toiled fanatically

at their conspiracy, and news of what they were doing was from time to time brought to Governor Harrison. He had no power to do more than wait the result, but he waited watchfully, and he had many friends in every tribe who were sure to keep him well advised. Some of these were chiefs who before long paid the death penalty of witchcraft for daring to oppose the plans of Olliwachica.

The revival of the old traditions and the manner of their preaching may be said to have assumed, even more than at the beginning, the form of a new religion. Probably no new religion was ever preached which did not, like this, base itself upon something older, and thereby appeal to ideas already deeply rooted in the minds of men.

As for the conspiracy, it was the plan of King Philip or of Pontiac upon a wider scale. It was evident to any warrior of common-sense that no single tribe was capable of contending with the pale-faces. From time to time many of their leading chiefs and braves had visited the older settlements, some going as far as the city of Washington, and had brought back very nearly incredible stories of the wonders they had seen and heard. In spite of all that, however, savage ideas of the relative strength of the two peoples were grotesquely erroneous. Only a very few of the whites, they argued, were warriors, while every Indian was a great fighter as compared with even the soldiers. The corn-planting palefaces would all stay at home, and as many men in uniform as they might choose to send into the woods could be easily destroyed if the Ind-

ians would combine and act in unison. There was no talk of driving the settlers from their present possessions, except at some points where they had pushed westward too far, but they must be checked. A boundary line must be established beyond which neither white men nor their manufactures, particularly fire-water, should be permitted to pass.

Tecumseh was widely known as a great warrior, and it was easy for him to obtain a hearing by the assembled dignitaries of each tribe, to whom he sent notice that he was about to pay them a visit. With or without the company of his brother, he met the men of the woods in council, from the upper lakes to the heart of what is now Alabama. He was an eloquent speaker, and his listeners were only too well aware of the truth of much that he had to say, whatever of falsehood there might be in the remainder. Wherever needful, it was easy to cloak any more violent designs under a proposed policy of non-intercourse, and the new religion of savage simplicity began at last to make its converts more rapidly.

The true nature and sure consequences of such a movement among such a people could not fail to be understood by a man of Governor Harrison's experience and sagacity. The trouble was sure to come unless the red chiefs themselves should succeed in breaking the influence of the two brothers. Many were jealous of it, and many were wise enough to see that the proposed league of tribes tended to no good. It was owing to their opposition, in part, that the schemes of the Prophet matured so slowly,

but more, in all probability, to the general inclination of the red men to obtain whatever the white traders would bring them, especially the rum interdicted by the preachers.

The discontented and unbelieving were Governor Harrison's spies, and in the year 1807 they brought him information which convinced him that the Shawnees, at least, were in need of a warning. They were preparing for a violent outbreak of some sort, and it was an important point gained if their plan could be deprived of the element of concealment and surprise, altogether essential to Indian tactics. Their counsels were reported to the governor so fully that he was able to send to the Shawnees a message in which he rehearsed the entire matter. He reproved them severely for the course they were taking, and referred to the Prophet by assuring them that "their chiefs were listening to a fool who speaks not the words of the Great Spirit, but the words of the Devil."

The Prophet himself dictated to the governor's messenger a reply in writing, as follows :

"Father : I am sorry that you listen to the advice of bad birds. You have impeached me with having correspondence with the English and with calling and sending for the Indians from the most distant parts of the country, 'to listen to a fool who speaks not the words of the Great Spirit, but the words of the Devil.'

"Father ! These impeachments I deny and say they are not true. I never had a word with the English, and I never sent for any Indians. They came here themselves to listen and hear the words of the Great Spirit.

"Father ! I wish you would not listen any more to the voice of bad birds, and you may rest assured that it is the least of our

ideas to make disturbances ; and we will rather try to stop any such proceedings than encourage them."

The threat and peril of savage inroads could not be removed from the Indiana settlements by that kind of correspondence. No information could yet be laid before Congress which would operate as an imperative demand for extended action. The country considered itself poor, and all its financial affairs were conducted upon a scale of the most closely watched economy. The naval and military establishments were kept at the lowest possible mark, and the army was altogether insufficient for the protection of the long frontier. No change for the better came with the election of James Madison to the Presidency, in 1808, for he was one of the most unwarlike of statesmen. The new administration was but a continuation of the old, and was apparently well contented to leave Governor Harrison and his log-cabin neighbors to take care of themselves.

So very plainly was this the case that throughout the Western country there grew up a strong and jealous sense of neglect. There were no railways or telegraphs, nor were there good postal facilities. The scattered settlements of the Mississippi Valley were far away from the towns and cities of the Atlantic seaboard. It looked as if a new republic were growing up in the wilderness, with a probable eastern boundary line suggested by the Alleghany Mountain ranges. That a discontented state of feeling existed was duly reported by the Eastern press. While most people paid it no manner of at-

tention, it may be that it entered somewhat into the plans of Aaron Burr, whatever may have been the true nature of his mysterious conspiracy. The idea that the Western settlers were weakening in their attachment to the Union must have gone across the ocean in an exaggerated form, for, only a few years later, during the War of 1812, British commanders in the South sent out special proclamations to the people, appealing to them as in some manner separated in heart and interest from other Americans. Their mistake lay in supposing that a set of men who were conscious of a great need for more attention to their affairs could be persuaded to cut away and receive less.

The growth and condition of the Western country, from year to year, from 1801 to 1813, can be traced in the official reports and correspondence of Governor Harrison better than in almost any other manner. His writings make up a very interesting history. It was very much such a history as is at this time making in several of our Territories, with the difference that there were no mines nor miners in all the region that he governed, and that the forest Indians of that day fought on foot, from cover to cover, instead of scouring wide plains on horseback.

Throughout the year 1809 the governor kept himself well advised of the designs and movements of the Shawnee conspirators. He knew that they were obtaining adherents in several tribes, but that wherever they went they were confronted by the strong opposition of the older chiefs and by the yet stronger dislike of Indians and squaws for a new

doctrine which asked them to give up so very much. The Prophet and Tecumseh were greatly aided, on the contrary, by the steady encroachments of the settlers and by the increasing scarcity of game. The wilder spirits were getting excited, and there was a growing willingness to make a warlike experiment and see if the Prophet told the truth in assuring his followers of acquiring all the knowledge and riches of the palefaces in case they would abandon their evil ways and obey his teachings.

The territorial Legislature of Indiana was now in regular performance of a large part of the duties which had once burdened the governor, but he was still something like a viceroy ruling a people who were for the greater part in thorough accord with him. They were so sure he would do the best he knew how for the general good that they were disposed to let him do very much as he pleased.

It was a matter of course that he had enemies, political and personal, but his even temper and ready courtesy prevented his record from being marked by any such unpleasant incidents as were only too common in the lives of other noted men of the Western border, and he was known to be firmly opposed, on principle, to the prevailing practice of duelling.

If his relations with the white people were entirely satisfactory, moreover, it was largely because they believed him the only man who knew precisely what to do with the red people. Over the latter his nominal authority, as representing the Government of the United States, was very full, and his actual

power very thin and weak. What there was of the latter depended largely upon their personal respect for himself, and that was rarely strong enough to prevent a war party of young braves from a secretly planned raid among the settlements. It was true that Olliwachica and Tecumseh professed to discourage hostilities of all sorts, great or small, but the war parties were well understood to be composed of those who had accepted the Prophet's doctrine of enmity to the whites.

It grew more and more evident, in the Spring of 1810, that Governor Harrison must do something more than collect information as to what the conspirators were accomplishing. He made a last effort on behalf of peace, and he cannot be said to have made it with reasonable prudence. A council of chiefs was summoned to meet the governor at Vincennes on August 12th, 1810. Word was sent to Tecumseh that he must bring no more than thirty warriors with him, and the preparations for his reception were made precisely as if he were expected to obey. Even when the Shawnee leader arrived in the neighborhood of Vincennes with three hundred chosen warriors and people generally were alarmed, Governor Harrison did not at once take any additional military precautions. He sent a remonstrance, however, and received for answer that the chief feared treachery on the part of the palefaces, and had come prepared to protect himself.

The council was to have been held in the large piazza in front of the governor's residence, but

Tecumseh refused to come to the house. He left the main body of his braves in their camp, but forty of them attended him when he presented himself. He insisted that the council should be held in a grove of trees at a little distance from the piazza, and it was a wise enough precaution, whether he actually feared treachery or only intended it. He said, at the same time, that chairs need be brought out only for white men :

“ The earth is the mother of the red men, and they are happy to recline upon her bosom.”

The governor gave a dignified assent to the demands of the haughty savage, took his seat among the trees, and opened the council in due form. Tecumseh himself was the first speaker, in response to the opening remarks of the governor, and said :

“ What I am I have become by my own exertions. I would that I could make the red men as great as I picture them when I think of the Great Spirit and his wish to render all his people noble and happy. Were such the case, I would not come to General Harrison, beseeching him to annul the treaty, but I would say to him, ‘ Brother, you are at liberty to return to your own country.’ There was a time when the foot of the white man did not crush the fallen limbs in our paths. This country then belonged to all the red men. It was created for the red man and his children. We were all united, and the Great Spirit placed us here, and filled the land with fruit and game for our use. We were then happy. We are now made miserable by the white man, who is never contented, but asks us for more and more land. The white people have driven us from the great salt lake. They follow us over the mountains as we retire toward the setting sun. They would force us into the lakes, but we are determined to go no further.

“ The march of the white man must be stopped. The Indians must insist upon the original compact. The land belongs to all, and all must still own it. It was our fathers’, we must give it to

our children. It cannot be divided. We have no right to sell, even to each other. How, then, can we sell to strangers? Why should we, when they are never satisfied? The land is ours, and the white men have no right to take it from us. The Indians, should they sell, can only do so when all the tribes are together and when all consent. No sale is valid unless made by all. The late sale was made only by a few tribes, and is, therefore, nugatory."

Such was the argument of the great Shawnee chief as rendered into English by the interpreter. It was probably the same that he had again and again uttered in the councils of the tribes when no white hearers were present. It cannot be denied that it contained a very plausible statement of the Indian side of the question, but it was based upon fallacies.

Tecumseh sat down upon the ground, and Governor Harrison arose to reply. He was thoroughly familiar with the history of Indian titles and land sales, and proceeded to demolish the plea of the red orator. In the course of his remarks he said :

"When the white people arrived on this continent they found the Miamis in the occupation of all the country of the Wabash, and at that time the Shawnees were residents of Georgia, from which they were driven by the Creeks. The lands have been purchased from the Miamis, who were the true and original owners of them. It is ridiculous to assert that the Indians are one nation, for if such had been the intention of the Great Spirit, he would not have put six different tongues into their heads, but would have taught them all to speak one language."

The governor went on to defend the particular features of the existing treaty and its binding authority, and the Indians heard him to the end in dignified silence. No sooner, however, did the in-

terpreter cease speaking than Tecumseh sprang to his feet.

“It is false !” he shouted, and his warriors also sprang up, war-clubs in hand, as if at a preconcerted signal. Several times before had Governor Harrison been in apparently extreme peril during his interviews with the excitable and reckless children of the forest, but never had his life seemed of less value than now, even when he had been almost alone among them. His official guard of twelve soldiers had been stationed among some trees at a little distance, and around him were only a few unarmed citizens. He put his hand upon his sword, but did not draw it and remained seated, retaining an entirely undisturbed demeanor. His friend Major Floyd drew a dirk, and a friendly chief named Winnemak cocked a pistol, while the Rev. Mr. Winans ran into the house and obtained a rifle. The mere squad of soldiers did not flinch, but moved forward ready to fire. Tecumseh lost his opportunity, for he paused to harangue his braves, and both he and they had time to consider the matter. The moment his eloquence slackened a little the governor spoke again. He coolly told the chief that “he was a bad man. There would be no further talk with him. He must return to his own camp and leave the settlements immediately.”

Harrison’s knowledge of Indian character, backed by his superb personal courage, had guided him correctly, for the chief at once gave up his murderous intention. He even apologized, and complied with the governor’s order to return to his camp.

Consent was given for another conference upon the following day, but there was then no repetition of excessive confidence in savage honor, for the council was held in the presence of two full companies of riflemen.

Tecumseh repeated his arguments and demands, and was openly sustained by the chiefs of no less than five different tribes. They united in requiring the restoration of the old boundary line of the Indian lands, as it had existed before the treaties under discussion were made.

The question was broadly and definitely presented whether or not the red men had a right to prevent the white race from occupying and settling the continent of North America. If any one saw, nobody then plainly declared the manifest absurdity of such a claim, and the fundamental right of civilized men to redeem all wildernesses for the benefit of the entire human race was left to be haggled over to the present day.

Governor Harrison told the chiefs that their demands were inadmissible, but that what they had said would be duly reported to the President of the United States for his decision.

Tecumseh again asserted his innocence of any violent or treacherous purpose at the first meeting, and on the following day the governor visited his camp almost alone. It looked as if his personal courage had once more carried him beyond the boundaries of reasonable prudence, but he knew the men with whom he was dealing, and he was really more secure without any pretence of an armed

guard. He was treated with the utmost respect by the chiefs and warriors, and held another long conference with Tecumseh.

The governor spoke freely and plainly, by no means concealing his opinion of savage requirements or his full knowledge of the mischief in course of preparation. The final response of Tecumseh was as follows :

“ Well, as the great chief is to determine the matter, I hope the Great Spirit will put sense enough in his head to induce him to direct you to give up the land. It is true he is so far off that he will not be injured by the war. He may sit still in his town and drink his wine, while you and I have to fight it out.”

He and his warriors and his allies departed, leaving behind them a clear understanding that existing treaties and land titles under them were of small value until the power of the Prophet and his brother should be broken. What that power might be and how many armed warriors they could bring into the field, if acting for themselves alone, was much a matter of conjecture ; but they and Governor Harrison knew that behind them and co-operating with them was a far more dangerous enemy of the young Republic.

The story of Governor Harrison's cool intrepidity was a good one to tell among the cabins of the settlers. It crossed the mountains and was heard among the older neighborhoods all over the land, but there were no illustrated journals to seize upon it as a fine subject for a picture. The time was to come, however, when it would have a political value and would influence voters.

The purposes of the red men and the condition of the Western country were fully and promptly set before the Government in the correspondence of Governor Harrison. The administration of President Madison, however, was at that time beset with all sorts of difficulties, and was unprepared for a vigorous Indian policy. With reference to its foreign affairs, as well as to its frontier disturbances, it was forced to drift for a few months more, very much as if it hoped for better things from the British Ministry or from Olliwachica and Tecumseh. There could be no such hope, for the former would not give up the right of search, and the latter would not surrender the land question.

CHAPTER VI.

Condition of the Country—Attitude of Great Britain—The War Party—Growing Statesmen—More Councils with Tecumseh—Border Warfare—Battle of Tippecanoe—The Story of Ben.

THE people of the United States had worked their way into a very perplexing state of affairs by the beginning of the year 1811. They were hardly recognized as a nation by the statesmen of Europe. Among these there was a confident expectation, while among American patriots there was a great fear that the Union of States was too weak a bond to hold so large a country together for any great length of time. There were no great parties in the country, with distinctly declared doctrines and plans of national administration. The remains of the crushed Federal Party were ready to oppose any policy which might be proposed by the Republican Party, in control of the Government, but the leading men of the latter were at variance among themselves, and were not ready to unite in proposing anything.

It was a time of great financial distress, in spite of the facts that so many new farms were opening, that flocks and herds were increasing so fast, and that home manufactures were springing into life more rapidly than ever before.

There was almost no foreign commerce. More than a thousand ships had put to sea on June 10th, 1809, when the repeal of the Embargo seemed to set them free, but they had gone out only to find that the ocean was not yet a safe place for the American flag, and a great part of the too-hasty adventurers did not again reach American harbors.

Something like a state of suppressed war existed with Great Britain, and even with France, and the strongest, most active faction in the United States was that which was beginning to clamor for open conflict.

All men were so accustomed to regard Europe as in some manner the world, that they placed altogether too much importance upon the relations of their own country with foreign powers. Nevertheless, their national feeling was growing fast, and the Union became safer because of the general resentment against the treatment given to the young Republic by the old monarchies. There were exceptions among these, and several important national friendships were beginning to form, like that of Russia, but they were not of a sort to be popularly understood or appreciated. The pressure exerted by Great Britain upon the sea and along the Canada border, however, was of a sort which all men could be made to feel. Half the population of the country lived very near tide-water, while another large part lived within reach of possible Indian war parties.

Spain still owned Florida, and the vast Louisiana territory had become American only to such an extent that the United States had now a right to navi-

gate the Mississippi, station troops at New Orleans, and establish military posts at St. Louis, Natchez, and other points along the river. Little was known of the regions farther west, and the politicians who were watching European affairs hardly dreamed of a political future to be controlled by men who were then disputing with red men about treaties or arguing petty cases in backwoods courts.

Of these men, three had already attained positions the political strength of which only waited opportunities for manifestation. Henry Clay had already made his mark in Congress, and was the eloquent advocate of retaliatory war with England. Andrew Jackson, Major-General of the Tennessee Militia, may be said to have had under his command, quartered in their own cabins, the most effective military force in the whole country. Upon him was sure to fall the direction of coming events in the Southwest. William Henry Harrison, governor and commander of militia, was the most prominent figure north of the Ohio River, but the United States posts along the Canadian line were held by regular troops, commanded by officers whose incompetence had not yet been discovered.

Nearly all of the opposition to a war with England was to be found among the commercial communities of the Atlantic seaboard, particularly in New England and New York. Shipbuilders and merchants were almost united in the belief that their interests could be protected and their prosperity restored without a fight, which must for the time being sweep the seas of all the American commerce re-

maining. So far as that argument went, they were able to make out a strong case, but there were greater questions at stake than those of temporary profit and loss to the commercial classes. All of these questions cannot be treated in a biography like this, but there was one of them which had much to do with making several Presidents of the United States.

In all the older States there was an important element left behind by the war for independence, which cherished a more or less bitter feeling against England, whether her present conduct might be good or bad. No other man represented it more perfectly than did Colonel James Monroe of Virginia, and he became Secretary of State accordingly, in November, 1811. The most earnest demand for war, however, did not come from the old soldiers of Washington's army, but from the extreme Western border. When, not many months later, the Red Stick Creeks, in Alabama, declared to General Jackson that they were an independent nation, bound to maintain their ancient treaty of alliance with Great Britain, and when a British commander formally called upon them to do so, the cause of the Western war feeling was very fairly illustrated. The settlers believed that the tribes by whose war parties they were harried were incited to hostilities by the agents of the British Government. Men like Clay and Harrison and Jackson were convinced that the British Ministry, looking forward to dissensions dividing and weakening the colonies, hoped for some hour of disaster when the rule broken by

the war of the Revolution might be re-established. With this idea and purpose, hardly more than half concealed, British influence among the tribes was to be continually maintained, and the dissensions between the red men and the Americans were to be fostered. It was a complaint repeatedly made against Tecumseh and the Prophet by Governor Harrison that they were in correspondence with the British-Canadian authorities, and the course of events finally justified his assertion. The designs of the British Ministry with reference to the Louisiana Territory were also brought out into clear light by the great invasive expedition which came to an end at the battle of New Orleans.

The popular mind found a close parallel between the asserted right of English cruisers to stop and search American ships at sea and the other fact that British agents meddled with the relations of the United States and its wild tribes. If there was any great exaggeration in the impression upon the minds of the backwoodsmen, nothing was done by the British frontier commanders for its removal, and it grew stronger and more bitter with the growth of Tecumseh's league. He and his brother and their new religion were regarded as little better than a British skirmish line.

The foreign pressure exercised upon American sea-going interests became worse and worse, until it assumed the form of a semi-blockade. Its arrogance had been vividly illustrated, in 1807, by the attack made by the British frigate *Leopard* upon the American frigate *Chesapeake*. That had been a

humiliating disgrace for which no sufficient reparation was ever made, and the changed temper of the United States was expressed well, in May, 1811, when the British sloop-of-war *Little Belt* was severely chastised by the American frigate *President*.

The kind of pressure upon the Western and Northern border corresponded in its manners as well as in its nature with that brought to bear at sea, and the commanders of British frontier posts had as little regard for American rights as if they had been so many sea captains. All through the Spring and Summer of the year 1811 it became more and more manifest to Governor Harrison that Olliwachica and Tecumseh were preparing for an extended campaign, with the Canada frontier and its fortified posts as a base of operations. It was well known that they had tried to arouse the Creeks, Cherokees, Choctaws, and Seminoles of the extreme South, but their success was believed to have been imperfect. At all events, the existence and the military strength of the Kentucky and Tennessee settlements cut the savage confederacy in two, and its northern half was afterward destroyed before any important rising took place at the South.

In the early Summer of 1811 news came to Vincennes that a thousand warriors, many of them from Northern tribes, had gathered at Tippecanoe, the Prophet's town, and that the talk among them was all about a general confederacy of the red men against the whites. A messenger who could go to Tippecanoe and get back again was not easy to find, but the governor found him. He was a member of

a small religious community known as Shakers, and was a personal friend of Tecumseh, whom he declared to be as good a Shaker as himself. He consented to act as ambassador, and carried to the Shawnee leaders a message, in which the governor drew a vivid picture of the destructive consequences, especially to the Indians, of such a war as they were undertaking. He said to them :

“Brothers ! I am myself the Long Knife fire. As soon as they hear my voice, you will see them pouring forth their swarms of hunting-shirt men, as numerous as the mosquitoes on the shores of the Wabash. Brothers, take care of their stings.”

The Indian confederacy was not yet ready for open war, and the Shaker envoy brought back a message from Tecumseh that he would meet the governor in eighteen days, “to wipe out all those bad stories.”

He kept his word, coming to Vincennes July 27th, 1811, with three hundred warriors, not less than two hundred of whom attended him at the council itself. The governor’s guard, this time, consisted of a full company of dragoons, dismounted but ready for duty.

A rain-storm broke up the council on the first day, and on the next there was a renewal of the old land discussion, with important additions. There had been many murders committed by Indians, but in most cases there had been left no living white witnesses to tell by whom the deeds were committed.

There were two Pottawattamies, however, who were well identified as guilty of atrocities, and they were now in the Prophet’s town. Their surrender for

trial and punishment was demanded and refused. Tecumseh himself declared that all injuries on both sides ought to be forgiven, as a necessary part of the negotiations for peace. It was an uncommon example of savage hypocrisy, for his next proposition was that a sort of truce should be declared until he should return from a long journey he had before him in the Southern country. He did not say, as was true, that his tour among the Creeks and other Southern tribes was for the purpose of urging them to immediately take up the tomahawk, but promised that upon his return he would go to Washington in person and settle matters with the President. In the meantime he would send out messengers to restrain the several tribes from hostilities, asserting that they were all under his authority, and would comply with his injunctions. In conclusion, he offered belts of wampum in payment for murders committed by his followers.

Governor Harrison indignantly rejected the proposed payment, the council broke up, the Indian part of it disappeared among the woods, and Tecumseh set out upon his Southern mission. How much he accomplished while absent was shortly witnessed by the terrible history of the Creek campaigns, but when he went South he left behind him no authority capable of restraining the aroused war-spirit of his followers in the Indiana Territory.

Olliwachica really believed himself possessed of supernatural power, but was by no means the equal of his brother in practical leadership. Not the Prophet but Tecumseh was the statesman and gen-

eral of the forest confederacy. The Prophet's town, however, had become a sort of Mecca for curious pilgrims from all the tribes. Those who came, bringing presents of provisions, which were shared in common, saw remarkable things and heard astounding declarations of great changes about to be made for their benefit. The Prophet assumed to be a magician, and there were strange ceremonials, with hideous incantations, which no white man was permitted to see or hear and live. Charms were manufactured and distributed among believers to protect them from paleface weapons, and they were assured that in any battle for the new faith they would be invulnerable.

Fanatics taught and excited in such a manner could not be restrained, and marauding parties of them penetrated the settlements more deeply than ever before. Homesteads which had been deemed secure were visited with pitiless destruction. Men and women and children were butchered, houses burned, and property carried away. The awful record was sent to Washington, and President Madison at last gave Governor Harrison authority to march against the Prophet. It was given with reluctance, even then, and was hampered by peremptory orders from the Secretary of War "to avoid hostilities of any kind or to any degree not indispensably required." If Tecumseh had not been so far away, such orders might have been of greater value.

Kentucky had suffered a full measure of the horrors of savage warfare, and its people were with

Governor Harrison heart and soul. Sixty or seventy riflemen came to join him at once, promising as many more as he might need. The Fourth United States Infantry, Colonel Boyd, three hundred and fifty strong, was also put under his command, and his own volunteers numbered over six hundred, about a hundred and twenty being mounted. He informed his little army that, in case of any collision with the Indians in force he should follow the tactics of General Wayne, and trust to the bayonet. He also followed the example of his old leader on the march, moving and camping in a well-watched order of battle, ready for instant action, and not to be taken by surprise. If he had not done so, neither he nor his men would have returned to the settlements. The forces had rendezvoused at Fort Harrison, sixty miles above Vincennes, and the movement toward Tippecanoe began on October 28th, 1811.

More as a matter of form than for any expectation of good results a demand was sent to the Prophet for the Pottawattamie murderers and for the return of stolen horses. The reply was a contemptuous refusal, and the Prophet at once sent out a war party to watch the governor's advance, with orders to kill all white men they might find within their reach.

The orders of the Secretary of War permitted Harrison to move forward, but compelled him to wait for an attack. So cautious a march was necessarily slow, feeling its blind way through the woods, and a sudden movement across the Wabash, to get

into a more open country, baffled any savage plans for ambuscade. For three days after crossing the river there were no signs of Indians, and a new and terrible anxiety presented itself.

What if the savage leaders had left the troops to a useless march through the wilderness and had made a dash upon the unprotected settlements behind them? Vincennes and other towns and villages would be almost at their mercy, and the picture presented to the mind of the harassed commander was so terrible that he could not sleep. He detached Major Jordan with forty men and orders to fortify the court house and other buildings at Vincennes, as places of temporary refuge for women and children; to call out all the fighting men left, and to send to Kentucky for help.

The Prophet was not a general capable of so bold a stroke, and had contented himself with setting very much the kind of trap by means of which the army of St. Clair, stronger than that now led by Harrison, had been defeated and half destroyed.

By skilfully cautious marches the governor moved forward until, on November 5th, he was within a few miles of Tippecanoe, but it still seemed as if the woods contained no Indians, and the suspense was a trial hard to bear. The next day, at noon, as the advance pushed slowly on, Indians began to show themselves, making insulting gestures and refusing to open communication. At about a mile and a half from the known site of the town Harrison halted and proposed to fortify a camp. He was ignorant of the nature of the ground before

him, and was in some doubt whether a further advance might be construed into a violation of his orders. He also wished to hear from some friendly Indians whom he had sent with a peaceful message to the Prophet. All his officers urged him to push forward, and one, Major Daviess, knew the country, having gone through it as a surveyor, while another volunteered to carry a flag of truce. The latter was soon compelled to give up his courageous undertaking, but three Indian messengers, one of them a councilor of the Prophet, came to offer what amounted to a proposition for a temporary truce. They were part of Olliwachica's trap.

The troops were led to what seemed a very good camping-ground high and dry above the swamps along the river. The Indian town was less than a mile away in full view on a hill, and was evidently garrisoned by swarms of warriors.

All dispositions for the night of November 6th were made with especial care. Every man lay down with his clothes and accoutrements on him and his arms within reach. The sentries knew that their lives depended upon their watchfulness, and yet they very nearly watched in vain.

At about a quarter before four o'clock of November 7th Harrison arose and sat by his camp fire. There was a dim moonlight alternating with clouds and dashes of rain. It was just about time to sound the signal for the men to turn out when the camp was startled by the report of a musket, followed by the yell of savage onset.

The stealthy red men had crept so near in the

darkness that they were able to hear the low-voiced challenges and replies of the sentries changing guard. One sentry, however, had caught a glimpse of an Indian near him in the grass and had fired.

The soldiers arose from their bivouacs ready for action, their leader sprang upon his horse and rode rapidly along his lines, the air rang with yells and shouts, with the rattle of musketry and the sharp cracking of rifles.

There had almost been a surprise but not quite, and there remained a chance for the white men to defend themselves. They were about eight hundred in number, and the greater part of them had never before been under fire. With a few exceptions they behaved nobly, although broken at some points by the sudden rush of the enemy. The Indians also fought hard but irregularly, and were disconcerted by the unexpected state of preparation in which they found the camp.

They soon began to fall back, and by the time the sun was well up the battle was over. Their loss in wounded was never ascertained, but thirty-eight dead warriors were found on the field, and others afterward in the town, while some were known to have been buried. The troops lost fifty killed and about a hundred wounded.

Governor Harrison was peculiarly exposed during the fight, the Indians having an especial desire to kill him, but he escaped unhurt, the nearest bullet passing through the rim of his hat.

The time came, nevertheless, when the virulence of partisan calumny accused him of having run away

from the battle of Tippecanoe—that is, the vivid imagination of party editors pictured him as prudently escaping from among his brave riflemen into the comparative security of the swarm of red men in the forest around them.

The slave trade was active in that day, and one of its most peculiar consequences was exhibited, at the South rather than at the North, at every point where runaway slaves could make common cause with the Indians. The Creeks and Seminoles especially were joined by numbers of black recruits, not a few of whom had been born warriors in Africa. The night before the battle of Tippecanoe a negro named Ben had been captured while lurking near the governor's tent, with a plainly proved purpose of assassination. Immediately after the battle he was tried by a drumhead court-martial, and was condemned to be shot. What was actually done with him can best be told by Governor Harrison himself, in the words of a letter which he wrote about it to his friend, Governor Scott, of Kentucky.

“The fact was,” he wrote, “that I began to pity him, and could not screw myself up to the point of giving the fatal order. If he had been out of my sight he would have been executed, but when he was first taken General Wells and Colonel Owen, who were old Indian fighters, as we had no irons to put on him, had secured him after the Indian fashion. This is done by throwing a person on his back, splitting a log and cutting notches in it to receive the ankles, then replacing the severed parts and compressing them together with forks driven

over the log into the ground. The arms are extended and tied to stakes, secured in the same manner. The situation for a person secured is as uneasy as can possibly be conceived. The poor wretch thus confined lay before my fire, his face receiving the rain that occasionally fell, and his eyes constantly turned upon me as if imploring mercy. I could not withstand the appeal, and I determined to give him another chance for his life. I had all the commissioned officers assembled, and told them that his fate depended upon them. Some were for executing him, and I believe that a majority would have been against him but for the interference of the gallant Snelling. 'Brave comrades,' said he, 'let us save him. The wretch deserves to die, but as our commander, whose life was more particularly his object, is willing to spare him, let us also forgive him. I hope, at least, that every officer of the Fourth Regiment will be on the side of mercy.' Snelling prevailed, and Ben was brought to this place, where he was discharged."

Snelling and his brother officers were doubtless much influenced by their commander's known wishes, for his murder on the evening before the battle might have led to a massacre of them all in the dawn of the morning.

The Indians had not lost warriors enough to dishearten them, but the influence of Olliwachica had been shattered beyond restoration. The great prophet and magician had not been personally exposed in the battle. He had stationed himself upon an elevated piece of ground near by, and chanted a

war song as a kind of incantation. He had assured his deluded followers of victory and of being invulnerable to paleface bullets. He said that they would have light to aim by while their enemies would be in darkness. When informed that his braves were falling fast, he did but repeat his predictions, promise a speedy victory, and sing the louder.

The discovery that he was a humbug probably had much to do with the immediate dispersion of the Indians, for they still outnumbered the troops more than two to one, and occupied a strong defensive position.

As soon as his wounded could be cared for and his little army reorganized—for it had lost heavily in officers—Harrison advanced upon the town. He found it deserted, even some weapons and ammunition having been left behind in the haste of panic-stricken departure. The object of the campaign had been thoroughly accomplished, and nothing remained but to march back to Vincennes.

The news of the important blow given to the Prophet's confederacy went faster than the troops could march, and was everywhere received with enthusiasm. The long nightmare of the frontier seemed to be broken, and every settler felt that his life and home were more secure.

The Legislature of Kentucky at once adopted the following resolution :

“Resolved, That in the late campaign of the Wabash Governor W. H. Harrison has, in the opinion of this Legislature, behaved like a hero, a

patriot, and a general, and that for his cool, deliberate, and gallant conduct at the late battle of Tippecanoe he deserves the warmest thanks of the nation."

The territorial Legislature of Indiana passed similar resolutions, while the volunteers who fought under him held a meeting, and formally declared that their success in defeating the red men was owing to Harrison's "masterly conduct in the direction and manœuvring of the troops." The President sent to Congress a message setting forth the importance of the victory, regretting the losses sustained, and making special mention of "the collected firmness which distinguished the commander on an occasion requiring the utmost exertion of valor and discipline."

Now that the victory was gained, not anybody seemed disposed to criticise the exceedingly strong self-confidence which had carried such a handful of men, however brave and however well handled, into the very jaws of destruction. The troops themselves merited the highest praise for their good conduct in a morning twilight struggle, in which every fifth man was down, killed or wounded, before the survivors could see clearly enough to get a good shot at an enemy.

CHAPTER VII.

*Tecumseh's Return—War Declared with England—
The Rising of the Tribes—Hull's Surrender—Harrison a General—A very New Commission—Wide Authority—Quelling Discontented Volunteers.*

TECUMSEH returned from the South to find that his fanatical brother had precipitated matters in such a manner as to leave him no ground for any negotiations. He saw that he must at once declare in favor of the English, or else make a voluntary surrender to the Long Knives. As between the two paleface powers he correctly understood that the former were much the stronger, and he reasoned that with their assistance he would be able to recover and maintain "the old boundary line" which he demanded. The tribes were not prepared for immediate hostilities, however, and he himself was willing to temporize until he could rebuild his badly damaged confederacy. As early as December the chiefs of other tribes, but not any Shawnees, began to come in to Vincennes to try and settle matters with Governor Harrison. As many as eighty came during the following February, and by the end of March it looked as if there had been a harvest of peace from the field of Tippecanoe. It was a deceitful appearance, for while many of the forest leaders were sincere, more were under the influence of Te-

cumseh and his Canadian allies. The same chiefs, of both classes, met British agents in a war council held in May at Mississinewa, and again at Malden, in Upper Canada. In each council there were Indian speakers who denounced Tecumseh and the British, but they were sadly in the minority.

There were a few months of comparative quiet along the frontier, but war was formally declared between Great Britain and the United States on June 18th, 1812, and the savage tribes arose in arms as fast as the news spread among them. Their war parties fell at once upon the more exposed settlements, inflicting terrible barbarities. There had been neither warning nor preparation, and the people deserted their cabins and clearings to flock to Vincennes and other supposed places of refuge.

There was an almost unanimous voice calling for Governor Harrison to rally and lead such forces as could be gathered for the common protection. The Governor of Kentucky sent to him requesting a conference, and he at once proceeded to Frankfort. A grand reception was given him there, and the two governors discussed together the gloomy prospect and their plans for its improvement. At Lexington a public dinner was given, at which Harrison made a speech which so impressed his hearers that they urged him to put his military views in writing and transmit them to Washington. He hesitated at first, but yielded to an assurance from Henry Clay that the administration would be sincerely glad to receive advice from him at such a juncture. He wrote, and it was by no means an encouraging letter

for the President to read. In it he said, as if prophetically :

" If it were certain that General Hull would be able, even with the re-enforcement which is now about to be sent to him, to reduce Malden and retake Mackinac, there would be no necessity of sending other troops in that direction. But I greatly fear that the capture of Mackinac will give such *éclat* to the British and Indian arms that the Northern tribes will pour down in swarms upon Detroit, oblige General Hull to act entirely upon the defensive, and meet, and perhaps overpower, the convoys and re-enforcements which may be sent him. It appears to me, indeed, highly probable that the large detachment which is now destined for his relief, under Colonel Wells, will have to fight its way. I rely greatly upon the valor of these troops, but it is possible that the event may be adverse to us, and if it is, Detroit must fall, and with it every hope of re-establishing our affairs in that quarter until next year."

He referred to the exposed condition of other posts and places, and what the whole letter meant was, " You should have made better preparations before declaring war, and you should show more vigor now." Perhaps he did not know how really slender had been and then was the military power in the control of the President of the United States.

Mackinac was already in the hands of the British. A few days after the letter was sent Chicago had fallen. In a few days more General Hull had surrendered Detroit, and the entire border was open to any movement the British or their savage allies might please to undertake.

The Indiana men were rallying fast. Ohio raised twelve hundred volunteers at once. Five thousand five hundred Kentucky riflemen came forward at once, in response to the fiery eloquence of Henry

But until he was obliged to do so.

Clay. There was to be no lack of men, but there was a very serious question as to how they were to be commanded. The volunteers were so determined upon Harrison that they were almost ready to refuse to march under any other leader. Governor Scott of Kentucky was in full accord with his fellow-citizens, but he was hampered by a legal difficulty. Harrison's authority as territorial Governor entitled him to command only the Indiana troops, volunteers, or militia. He was not a citizen of Kentucky, and there was already a regularly appointed major-general for the troops of that State. There was a caucus held of leading citizens, headed by Henry Clay, and they advised Governor Scott to circumvent the law by appointing Harrison a *Brevet* Major-General of Kentucky militia, and give him command of the detachment about to be sent to Detroit, and of any re-enforcements which might follow. The governor did as they advised, and the volunteers were satisfied, but their troubles were not ended.

General Hull's surrender put an end to the campaign, but not to General Harrison's remarkable commission. The War Department at Washington named General Winchester to command all forces in the Northwest, and sent to Harrison a commission as brigadier-general in the regular army. He refused to accept it until he could inform the department of the steps he had already taken, and learn if his new commission placed him under the orders of General Winchester. He found, however, that it was needful for him to act for the public service

and particularly that he might not frustrate the exertions he was compelled to make to induce his men to serve at all under Winchester. They declared that they would do so only in the hope that their favorite would be given the supreme authority.

While this point remained unsettled—for communication with Washington was slow in those days—the newly-made Brigadier-General and Brevet Major-General of Kentucky militia gave his best attention to the army under him and to his plans for its profitable employment. He proposed the recapture of Detroit, the taking of Malden, and the control of Lake Erie. With reference to the latter object, he wrote to recommend the immediate construction of armed vessels upon the lakes.

The reports of the General to the Secretary of War presented a remarkable picture of American military affairs in the Western Department. While the entire Canadian border, with the lakes, was under control of the British, so that no barrier to their movements existed, Tecumseh's league had re-enforced them with bands of the best warriors of almost every Indian tribe. Even upon the banks of the Mississippi the work of destruction was going forward, and every detached post in the wilderness might be regarded as in a state of siege and peril. As for the troops under Harrison, brave and eager volunteers though they were, they were defectively supplied with arms and ammunition, and were almost destitute of provisions. The artillery train consisted of one old iron four-pounder, and if that should burst the army would be without cannon.

What he could not say for himself was vigorously urged by other writers, who plainly told the Government that its hope for good results to come depended upon William Henry Harrison and his volunteers, since everything else, including the War Department, had broken down. These representations had their full effect upon President Madison, and he acted upon them almost too late to prevent disastrous consequences.

Making the best use of all the resources placed at his disposal by the people of Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio, General Harrison moved his troops as rapidly as possible.

Fort Wayne was already invested by a numerous force of Indians, but they retreated upon Harrison's approach. He determined to act vigorously upon the offensive, and at once sent out strong detachments into the Indian country, left comparatively defenceless by the absence of the warriors on the warpath. Towns and cornfields were destroyed, but not in retaliation for the burning of settlers' cabins. It was strictly a military measure, and went far toward crippling an important part of Tecumseh's league.

While General Harrison was pushing the campaign in his own way, with the army which had chosen him for its leader, General Winchester arrived in the camp. He brought with him the first set of orders issued by the War Department, by virtue of which he assumed supreme command of the troops and the Western District.

This was the very thing which had been feared by

all in the West, and to which Harrison had already in writing refused to assent. He was not alone among military men in his lack of confidence in Winchester. He knew that General Jackson and other capable judges had already expressed similar views. There was no doubt but that Winchester had acquitted himself well in the war for independence, but he was now an elderly gentleman of elegant manners, somewhat accustomed to take his ease, and decidedly out of place in command of backwoods volunteers fighting savages. With him in supreme authority there might well be reason to fear another campaign of defeats and disgraces.

General Harrison turned over the army to General Winchester at once, and left the camp. He was on his way to his home, at Indianapolis, when he was overtaken by despatches from the War Department containing the later and wiser decision of President Madison. The new orders gave evidence that the representations of Henry Clay, Governor Scott, and other Western leaders had produced their full effect upon the mind of the President, and that he had peremptorily overruled all the "old army" jealousies. He appointed General Harrison to the command of the Northwestern army, but with extraordinary power, such as had been before given only to General Washington and to General Greene. After detailing the forces to be placed under Harrison's command—about ten thousand men, and with artillery means of supply—the order read: "Having provided for the protection of the Western frontier, you will retake Detroit, and, with

a view to the conquest of Upper Canada, you will penetrate that country as far as the force under your command will, in your judgment, justify. . . . With these objects in view, you will command such means as may be practicable, exercise your own discretion, and act in all cases according to your own judgment."

A wider authority could not well have been given, but it was no time to hamper a man who had already raised an army entirely devoted to him, and for whom a State had been compelled to invent an entirely new and original commission.

General Harrison promptly accepted the responsibility thus placed upon him, and turned his face again toward the army he had left. A considerable body of re-enforcements went with him, and he took them forward by severely rapid marches. The weather was bad, the commissariat had broken down, as usual, and the men suffered from fatigue, exposure, and hunger. The story is told that one evening they camped in the rain, without food or tents, and without even fires, for they had not yet been furnished with axes. A small fire had been kindled for the General, as an especial luxury, and he sat by it surrounded by his dripping officers. A spirit of well-justified discontent was abroad among the men, and they were grumbling audibly over what seemed their entirely needless privations. Suddenly the General turned to one of the officers who was known to have uncommonly good vocal powers, and called upon him for a comic Irish ballad then popular. It had probably never before

sounded so grotesquely comic and out of place, but the men caught the meaning of their commander. Song followed song, and the famine and the rain were beaten.

There had been almost a mutiny in the force under Winchester, for there were many causes of discontent to aggravate the dissatisfaction of the volunteers at the removal, as they understood it, of their chosen leader. One entire Kentucky regiment had declared its deliberate intention of marching home, and others were but little less than ready to follow. At this perilous juncture General Harrison arrived, late one evening, so worn out with his journey that he at once went to his quarters and lay down. The troops were not informed of his coming, but he was told of the state of affairs. He listened, and merely replying that he would settle it in his own way, went to sleep.

The next morning came, and the troops were startled by a ringing call to arms, instead of the customary reveille. No sooner were they ready than they were formed in a hollow square, and in the centre of it quickly appeared General Harrison himself. He was greeted with enthusiastic shouts of welcome. When these subsided, he addressed the men, formally assuming command and speaking hopefully of the work before them. He strongly expressed his regret at the reported discontent. It was mortifying to himself, he said, but was of small importance to the country. He had more men than he knew what to do with, and more were coming. It was fortunate that he had discovered the

dissatisfaction at the outset, in time to prevent it from becoming the cause of disgrace and disaster in the field. He then added :

“ Now, so far as the Government is interested, the discontented troops who have come into the woods with the expectation of finding all the luxuries of home and peace have full liberty to return. I will order facilities for their immediate accommodation, but I cannot refrain from expressing the mortification I anticipate from the reception they will meet from the old and the young who greeted them on their march to the scene of war as their gallant neighbors. What will be their feelings when they see those whom they hailed as their generous defenders now returning without striking a blow and before their term of plighted service had expired? If their fathers do not drive back their degenerate sons to the field of battle, their mothers and sisters will hiss them from their presence. If, however, the discontented men are disposed to put up with all the taunts and disdain which await them, wherever they may go, they are at liberty to go back.”

By the time the General ceased speaking there were no longer any discontented men in that camp. The most serious cause of complaint, that of being sent to fight under a man who, in their opinion, was likely to throw them away in some defeat or other, seemed to have been removed, and they were quite willing to remain. They were only half right, for Winchester himself had not been removed, but was still in camp as a not very compliant second in command to Harrison.

The causes of complaint which grew out of the miserable condition of the quartermaster's department and the wretchedly defective means of transportation and supply were not to be overcome by skilful addresses. The General continued to be hampered and harassed at every step by difficulties

precisely similar to those which in the South all but paralyzed the fiery energies of General Jackson. There were few resemblances between the two commanders, but there was a striking parallel in the patient patriotism, courage, and capacity with which they kept together and directed armies of half-fed volunteers and militia.

CHAPTER VIII.

Preparing for a Campaign—Wide Authority—The Massacre of the Raisin—A Navy for the Lakes—Siege of Fort Meigs—The Battle of Lake Erie—The Battle of the Thames—Death of Tecumseh—Harrison Removed from Command.

GENERAL HARRISON did not allow the approach of cold weather to interfere with his plan of campaign. He proposed to concentrate his army at the rapids of the Miami of the Lakes, with a military base extending from Sandusky, Ohio, on the right to Fort Defiance on the left. He reached Sandusky, in person, on December 18th, 1812, General Winchester being sent to take charge of operations on the left. Harrison's own especial attention was required for the improvement of army organization, and increasing the strength of the fortified posts. There were frequent skirmishes with small bodies of Indians, and the minor forts were liable to attack at any time. It was a winter campaign of extreme watchfulness, in which the enemy for a time apparently had the worst of it, while the American lines were steadily pushed forward. There were hundreds of men under Harrison who were there to take vengeance upon the savages, and it became necessary for him to issue special orders for the protection of Indian women and children, lest these should

share the fate of the murdered families of the Kentucky and Indiana settlers.

Renewed orders from Washington placed even a broader interpretation upon the discretionary powers already conferred, and General Harrison was left entirely unembarrassed, except by the presence of General Winchester. That officer had thus far conducted himself well, and there could be no question of either his patriotism or his zeal. What might well be questioned, however, was his knowledge of Indian character and of forest tactics. Orders which had been given him for an advance movement had also been countermanded speedily, on news coming to Harrison that Tecumseh was gathering a large body of warriors on the upper Wabash. The despatch directed Winchester to fall back to Fort Jennings, but, when it reached him, he was already on the march, and believed himself justified in going forward. He sent Leslie Coombs, of Kentucky, to inform General Harrison of his decision, and the messenger found his way on foot through the woods, with one man as a guide. It was startling news to the general commanding, but there was worse to come, although an attempt was at once made to support the officer who exhibited so rash a contempt of Tecumseh. General Winchester reached the rapids on January 10th, 1813, fortified a strong position upon the north bank of the river, and might have prospered fairly well if he could have been contented to remain there. He learned, however, that a body of Indians were on the river Raisin, moving toward the settlements, and, on the 17th, he sent

against them Colonel Lewis with five hundred and fifty men, followed by Colonel Allen with a hundred and ten more. Colonel Lewis sent back word that there were only four hundred Indians on the Raisin, but that the British Colonel Elliott was advancing with more Indians and a force of British soldiers, for an attack upon the camp at the rapids.

News of the British movement had reached Harrison also, and he was hastening to the support of Winchester, but it was too late for his best efforts to be of any use. Colonel Lewis had a sharp fight at Frenchtown, defeating about a hundred British and four hundred Indians. The loss of the enemy was heavy, and that of the Americans twelve killed and fifty-five wounded. Instead of ordering a retreat, Winchester came to the support of Lewis with two hundred and fifty men, and deemed himself so strong and so secure that his camp that night offered a strong contrast to that of Harrison before Tippecanoe. Even ordinary precautions were but imperfectly observed. During the night, January 21st, 1813, the enemy crept up unseen, and the war-whoop sounded at daylight. There was an overwhelming rush of wild warriors, supported by British regulars with six pieces of artillery, and the troops were slaughtered as they sprang to arms. Part of the right wing of Winchester's force succeeded in forming for battle only to break before the charge of the enemy, and the General himself was taken prisoner while bravely striving to rally his men. The left held its ground better, and a part of it, under Major Madison, held out with peculiar

obstinacy until General Winchester, already a prisoner, sent orders for its surrender. The brave major still refused, declaring that he had no confidence that any terms of capitulation would be respected. Colonel Proctor, commanding the combined force of British and Indians, indignantly gave his own personal word of honor that safety would be assured. The whole field had been a scene of disorderly butchery, and now, as soon as Major Madison and his men laid down their arms, Colonel Proctor turned them over to his savage allies, who proceeded to murder them all in cold blood. Not all American prisoners who died, however, were so fortunate as to be killed at once, for a number were kept by the red men for scenes of barbarous triumph, merciless torture, and cruel death, which continued during several days.

One major, one captain, and less than thirty private soldiers were all who escaped death or capture. The accounts which have been preserved of the massacre of the Raisin are fragmentary, and the testimonies are more or less conflicting as to the several responsibilities, but all agree as to its unmitigated horror. Searching censure was at once directed toward General Harrison, but it was disarmed by the fact that the forward movement of Winchester was made in disregard of distinct orders. Such evidence as could be collected went to prove that if proper precautions had been taken against a sudden attack, such a success of the enemy would have been impossible. One sad feature of the bloody result was the fact that a large part of the Kentucky vol-

unteers who perished were the very men who had almost mutinied on account of their lack of confidence in the General who had now so terribly justified their premonitions.

A part of the American prisoners received protection from the British, and Colonel Proctor was promoted to the rank of Major-General for the victory planned and won by Tecumseh and his warriors.

The grand campaign proposed by General Harrison was badly shattered by the affair of the Raisin. He did his best, however, to limit the evil consequences of a defeat so stinging severe. He fortified the camp at the rapids of the Miami of the Lakes, and named it Fort Meigs, made the best disposition he could for checking any supposable advance of the enemy, and then hurried to Kentucky for re-enforcements. At the same time he again urged upon the Government the construction of armed vessels upon the Lakes. In response to his representations, Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry was sent to Erie, with instructions to build and launch several new vessels suitable for lake service, and to repair and equip such others as he might be able to obtain.

Early in the Spring General Harrison returned to Fort Meigs, for there were signs of an advance of the enemy. By April 28th, 1813, the post was fully invested by a combined force of British and Indians, under General Proctor and Tecumseh. A vigorous cannonade was begun upon both sides on May 1st, but no great harm was done to the fort or its gar-

risson. On the 5th the Kentucky re-enforcements arrived, three thousand strong, under General Clay. Sharp fighting followed, in which the enemy were at first worsted, but a small detachment of Americans who followed too far were surrounded and captured. They surrendered to British officers, but the usual butchery by Indians at once began. It was stopped by Tecumseh himself, the chief declaring in strong language his opinion of the inhumanity of killing unarmed men.

Hardly was the skirmishing at an end before General Proctor distinguished himself by sending a flag with a demand for the immediate surrender of Fort Meigs, and for this piece of effrontery he received a sharp rebuke from General Harrison.

The attempt to reduce the post continued more and more feebly for a few weeks longer, and was then given up for the time. Early in July Proctor again advanced, and it was reported that Tecumseh, aided by the British Indian agent, Dickson, had gathered no less than five thousand warriors to strengthen the hands of his white allies. General Harrison had his hands more than full, for there were many minor engagements all along the line, and there was no forecasting at what point the next blow of the vigilant red leader might be aimed. How well the General performed his arduous task was proved by the fact that, before the end of the month, Proctor once more abandoned his attempt upon Fort Meigs. He led a force of five hundred British regulars and eight hundred Indians against Fort Stephenson, at Sandusky, while Tecumseh,

with two thousand warriors, watched the path to Fort Meigs to prevent re-enforcements from reaching what seemed to be a doomed garrison. When General Proctor demanded the surrender of Fort Stephenson, however, and added that in case of resistance he would be unable to protect its defenders from massacre by the Indians, Major Croghan, a mere youth in command of a boy garrison, replied that if the fort should be taken there would be no one left to massacre, as it would not be given up so long as a man in it remained alive. With a courageous appreciation of the kind of protection given by Proctor to his prisoners on other occasions, they preferred to die fighting rather than in cold blood.

The British and Indians made a persistent attack upon the fort, but were repulsed with heavy loss, in a manner which gained lasting fame for Major Croghan. At the same time, however, the anti-war party and all other enemies of President Madison's administration found at this and other points materials for bitter attacks upon General Harrison. According to the assailants of the President, the harassed General had cooped himself up at Fort Meigs and abandoned Croghan to his fate, when he should have gone out into the pleasant summer woods, and entirely destroyed the British army and Tecumseh and the confederated tribes of the Northwest.

The partisan criticisms upon the General's capacity did not express the opinion of the experienced Indian fighters under his command, or of Major Croghan himself, and their confidence in him had been

increased rather than diminished. More volunteers than he could accept were offered, especially in Kentucky, and the spirits of the settlers rose as the baffled invaders fell back. The Indian chiefs plainly perceived that no important impression had been made upon the strength of the Americans, and that the restoration of "the old boundary" was as far off as ever. It was not easy to keep their followers together, for military operations requiring patient endurance and a sufficient number of British troops had not been sent.

During all that harassing summer, General Harrison had been watching the progress of another and vitally important part of his plan for the invasion of Upper Canada. Commodore Perry and his shipwrights had worked with steady industry at Erie. They had felled trees, and from the green timber had constructed six new vessels. They had repaired and armed four more, and the entire fleet so obtained was at last, in August, floated out into the lake, over the bar at the harbor's mouth, with the help of scow "camels." It was believed to be superior in guns, if not in construction, to the British flotilla which had watched and waited for it, but it was short of men. This lack was made up largely by volunteers from Harrison's army, and Commodore Perry went to meet the opposing squadron on September 10th. His despatch announcing to General Harrison the result, "We have met the enemy, and they are ours," briefly expressed the fact that Great Britain no longer had any armed vessels afloat upon Lake Erie.

The road into Canada was now open, and the entire military position had undergone a sudden change. The American commander and not the British could select the point for striking.

Heavy re-enforcements were arriving fast. The Kentucky volunteers, whose terms of enlistment had expired, refused to go home. The whole army was brimful of enthusiasm, and the General decided to make a vigorous use of it. The troops were ferried across the lake between the 16th and 24th of September, and on the 26th General Harrison and Commodore Perry sailed to reconnoitre the important port and post of Malden. The next day general orders for an advance were issued, but there was to be no battle at that point. General Proctor had burned the fort and the navy yard, and had retreated. The American army followed, and the Canadian people along the route fled from their homes, as if another tribe of Indians were coming, until they were assured that nobody intended to hurt them.

On October 1st, Harrison announced to a meeting of his general officers his intention of pursuing the enemy until he should find them. They and he expected either a long pursuit or a short one, with a hard-fought battle at the end of it, but no such thing was before them. On the 5th, after several sharp preliminary skirmishes, General Proctor's force was encountered occupying a strong position, its left guarded by the river Thames, and its right by a forest and by two thousand warriors under Tecumseh. All the strength of the British

regular troops, however, was thrown away by a military blunder on the part of their commander. He had put them in position in open order, as if they were to be assailed only by infantry, perhaps not knowing that the American army possessed a peculiarly efficient cavalry force. This was Colonel R. M. Johnson's Kentucky regiment of mounted volunteers. The moment the blunder was reported to Harrison, he ordered a cavalry charge, and the fate of the battle was decided. The horsemen dashed through the extended, weakened line, and turned upon it, but it did not form again in face of the superior force of riflemen hurrying forward to support the cavalry. The brave fellows saw that it would be of no use, and threw down their arms. Tecumseh made a desperate effort to rescue his pale-face friends, but the rush of his warriors was met by a determined charge of the mounted men. There was a sharp struggle for a moment, and then with a great cry the Indians turned and fled, for their confederacy was broken, and their war for "the old boundary line" was over. Tecumseh was dead.

The losses on either side were very small, the British having only nineteen killed and fifty wounded. About six hundred were made prisoners, but General Proctor and a few of his officers and men escaped, beginning their effort to do so as soon as the line broke. The British commander's hasty care for his personal safety was not unwise, for many of Johnson's rough riders had lost friends or kindred at the Raisin, and might have been overhasty in case of catching the man whom they be-

lieved largely responsible for the horrors of that massacre.

The retreating Indians were not needlessly followed into the forest, as General Harrison well knew that they would speedily disperse and find their way to their own tribes.

All the artillery and stores of the British army in Upper Canada were now in the hands of the Americans and so was the province itself, but the most important fruit of the victory was by no means any influence it might have upon British plans for the further prosecution of the war. The real and very great value of the victory of the Thames was its effect upon all the Indian tribes of the Northwest. It settled forever the vexed land question, with reference to old treaties or to new, and cleared the way for the removal of the red men from all the territory now included in the great States of the Mississippi Valley. The consequences could hardly have been greater if a hundred thousand men had met on either side, and if half of them had fallen.

The news went fast throughout the United States, and was everywhere greeted with as much surprise as pleasure by a people who had been terribly dispirited by the previous military events of the War of 1812. Perry's victory had aroused them from a sort of lethargy, hardly any of them knowing that General Harrison had any part in the merit of it, and now came the death of the dreaded Tecumseh, the dispersion of his warriors, the capture of the British troops of Proctor, and the apparent occupation of Upper Canada.

General Harrison issued a proclamation to the people, assuring them of the peaceful enforcement of law during American occupation, but was painfully aware how faint and narrow was his actual conquest, and how defective were his means for further activities. Shortly after the battle he gave a dinner to thirty-five captured British officers, as an expression of soldierly good-will, and all the luxury he could set before them was roasted fresh beef without bread or salt. He and his army were living from hand to mouth, and he had not even captured anything which enabled him to give a better dinner.

President Madison sent to Congress a message, in which he pronounced a high eulogium upon the commander and his men, and Langdon Cheves declared, upon the floor of the Senate, that "the victory of Harrison was such as would have secured to a Roman general, in the best days of the Republic, the honors of a triumph."

The army began its homeward movement in October, and already chiefs of the Indian tribes were beginning to sue for peace. General Harrison referred their cases, as they were presented, to the Government at Washington, for his mind and time were fully occupied with other plans of a military nature, and he believed himself in full command of the Northern border. He sailed from recaptured Detroit, in the *Ariel*, accompanied by Commodore Perry, and on October 28th arrived at Erie, to be greeted by such a reception as their joint exploits seemed to merit. He was on his way, shortly

afterward, with fifteen hundred of his men to Fort Niagara, when he was met by orders from Washington to take his troops to Sackett's Harbor. All unknown to him, changes were taking place by which his plans were to be rendered useless and his military career brought to a speedy end.

From Sackett's Harbor, under orders received, he went on to Washington, by way of New York and Philadelphia. It was a species of triumphal progress, for in all the towns along the way he was greeted by gathered crowds, the roar of salutes, the peal of bells, and the glare of bonfires kindled in his honor. It was a time when the people were exceedingly glad of a military hero, who had actually won something. So very many of their possible heroes had either run away or surrendered, or been compelled to make excuses.

While at Fort George, before receiving the orders which practically rescinded his previous ample authority and restricted him to the Eighth Military District—the Western border—the General had had a vigorous correspondence with the British General Vincent with reference to the practice of turning over American prisoners to Indian mercies.

It was a matter of course that the representative of a civilized power should strongly disavow the charges of bad faith and barbarism so emphatically presented, but the ghastly record remains, as if it were a sequel to the fiery protests of Chatham and Colonel Barrè in Parliament during the Revolutionary War.

While Proctor received honor and promotion,

Tecumseh's widow and children, and his brother, the Prophet, were justly granted pensions. Olliwachica gave up preaching and prophesying, and lived a number of years in peace and comfort upon the gratitude of England.

CHAPTER IX.

General Harrison's Resignation—Indian Commissioner Once More—A Medal of Honor—Member of Congress—State Senator—Presidential Elector—United States Senator—Minister to Colombia—Removed by General Jackson—Clerk of Common Pleas—President—The End.

GENERAL HARRISON was apparently well received at Washington, and was urged by President Madison to proceed at once to Cincinnati to superintend operations in that quarter. He at first assented, in spite of his severe and humiliating disappointment, but there were more bitter things in store for him. The new Secretary of War, General John Armstrong, had imbibed a prejudice against a man whose rapidly-growing fame was in the way of his own ambition, to make himself at the same time secretary and general-in-chief, commanding the forces in the field. He was prevented by the vigorous protests of James Monroe from carrying that absurdity into full effect, but he succeeded perfectly in confusing the new campaign. So far as Harrison was concerned, almost the next order issued by Armstrong was a personal insult. It was sent to a Major Holmes, and gave him independent authority over troops which formed a part of the command assigned to Harrison, and were within his district.

The General saw but one course consistent with his own honor and the good of the service, and he acted promptly. The remarkable order of the Secretary of War was dated April 25th, 1814, and immediately upon official knowledge of it, Harrison forwarded his resignation. At the same time, Governor Isaac Shelby, of Kentucky, who had especially distinguished himself in the previous campaign, wrote an indignant protest against the treatment the Administration seemed to be meting out to the man whom the people of the West regarded as a hero.

Neither the resignation nor the protest at once met the eyes of the President, for when they arrived he was absent from Washington on a visit to his Virginia farm. Armstrong was there, however, and his plan for retiring Harrison had succeeded to his satisfaction. Without waiting for Mr. Madison's concurrence, he promptly accepted the resignation, and Harrison was no longer an officer of the army. In the very zenith of his military career he had suddenly been turned into a private citizen.

There was one specially noteworthy consequence of Armstrong's course toward the man he removed from power. A brigadier-general's commission in the regular army was opportunely left vacant, to be at once filled with the name of Andrew Jackson, that he might be put in command of the Southern forces. The blundering vanity of the Secretary of War did not prevent the subsequent eminence of Harrison, while it opened the way for a much more unmanageable and aspiring military and civil leader.

President Madison, on returning to Washington,

freely expressed his regret at what had been done, but he had not in him enough of dictatorial force to remedy the wrong decisively. He expressed his good-will and his confidence in General Harrison, however, by speedily placing him at the head of an important commission to treat with the Indian tribes. Governor Isaac Shelby and General Lewis Cass were joined with Harrison in that commission, and General McArthur and Hon. John Graham in another which he was appointed to in the following year, 1815.

Beyond a doubt, the right man had been put into the right place, and the country possessed no other public servant to whom it could more safely have intrusted the harvesting of the fruits of the long struggle with Tecumseh and his confederacy. It was well that the red chiefs should once more meet in council the white chief for whom they entertained so thorough a respect, and who, on his part, had so intimate an acquaintance with their general character, and even their personal traits and individual records.

The remarkable course of the Secretary of War ended with the burning of the city of Washington, which his genius for blundering had left unguarded ; other generals made or lost military reputations upon the Canada border and at the South ; while Harrison, as Indian Commissioner, carried on with wisdom and success what had really been the great work of his laborious life.

He had now become a citizen of the State of Ohio, owning a good farm at North Bend, on the

Ohio River, fifteen miles below the growing city of Cincinnati. His home was only a fair morning drive from the lines upon which he had posted his watchful sentries, when General Wayne made him commander of Fort Washington.

In the year 1816, Hon. John McLean, Representative in Congress from Ohio, resigned, and there was a sharp canvass for the succession. Six candidates were in the field, and William Henry Harrison was one of them. With all his known popularity, the count of votes presented a surprise, for he was elected by a majority of more than a thousand over all his competitors.

He had stepped from one field of duty and usefulness to another, but there had been a bitter cup in course of preparation for him. While in command of the army his rigid exactness had acquired him the enmity of every army contractor, whose course had failed to meet with his approval. One of these men brought forward a plausible accusation of improper conduct on the part of the General while in the field. An investigation was at once demanded, and while it was in progress, undecided, the General's friends too hastily brought before Congress an attempt to do him peculiar honor. A resolution was offered, presenting the thanks of Congress to Governor Isaac Shelby, of Kentucky, and General William Henry Harrison, and ordering two gold medals to be struck and given to them in commemoration of their services in the campaign of Upper Canada.

Nobody in the West had been at all troubled by

any charges affecting Harrison's integrity, and no proper estimate had been made of their influence upon men who did not know him. He was not an extreme political partisan, and was not supposed to be an object of partisan rancor. To the great surprise of his admirers, nevertheless, a motion made in the Senate to strike out his name from the resolution was adopted by a vote of thirteen to eleven. Some of the best men in the nation thereby declared their sense of his unworthiness, or, at least, their doubt as to the result of the pending inquiry into his conduct.

He felt the stab keenly, as his letters to his friends testify. It was as if an indelible stain had been put upon his honorable reputation. He wrote respectfully concerning the body of men by whom the blow had been given, but said : " I am bound to believe that the majority, at least, acted from correct principles, but on a subject so important to an individual, upon a vote which was to attach disgrace to his character which will follow him to his grave, and which will cause the blush to rise upon the cheek of his children, should they not have paused ?"

No such mark of dishonor was to be fixed upon him. The report made to Congress with reference to the charges, wiped them all away, and declared that " General Harrison stands above suspicion." The people of Ohio re-elected him to Congress, and, March 30th, 1818, the resolution of thanks and medals passed the Senate unanimously, and received but one negative vote in the House of Representatives.

While in Congress, General Harrison, as a rule, left the field of finance and current politics to other men, although he took a sufficient part in all important discussions, and warmly defended himself from a charge made by John Randolph, of Roanoke, that he was a Federalist. He gave his especial attention to Western lands, Indian affairs, and, more than all, to the proper organization of the national militia. He made one record of peculiar importance and significance, for he voted against the proposition to restrict the people of the Missouri Territory from organizing as a State, with a clause in their constitution permitting slavery. He declared his belief that the people should be free to regulate their own domestic institutions, and the position he took cost him a defeat when he asked a re-election by the people of the State of Ohio.

The voters of his own district elected him a member of the State Senate in 1819, and were entirely satisfied with the manner in which he served them.

He was chosen a Presidential elector in 1820, and cast his vote, as did all other electors, that year, for James Monroe and Daniel D. Tompkins. Four years later, he indicated not only personal attachment but future political affiliations, by casting a similar electoral vote for Henry Clay.

In 1824, the State of Ohio chose General Harrison to represent it in the Senate of the United States. His term of service in that body was very much like a continuation of his course in the Lower House. He was a hard-working, useful member, very effective in debate, without being a great orator ; much

deferred to when Western affairs were under discussion ; personally popular among his dignified associates, and notably devoid of the extreme party rancor which had succeeded to what had been described as " the era of good feeling."

In the Winter of the year 1819, while yet a member of the House, General Harrison cast one vote and made one speech which was to have an important effect upon his subsequent career. During the debate upon Henry Clay's famous resolution, declaring that General Jackson had exceeded his lawful authority in his conduct of the Florida or Creek campaign, Harrison found himself in a peculiarly delicate position. Jackson's military fame had first rivalled and then eclipsed his own. He had seemed to step out of the army that Jackson might step in, and the latter had not hesitated to make caustic criticisms upon Harrison's military career. There was no doubt whatever that the laws of nations, the instructions of the War Department, and the Constitution of the United States had been roughly pushed aside by General Jackson in his headlong dash over the Spanish border, and it was inevitable that Harrison should formally support Clay's resolution. He did so, but in a speech of almost excessive panegyric of the hero of New Orleans. It was a very eloquent eulogy, but General Jackson never forgave the adverse vote which it was intended to explain and sweeten. He took the first opportunity afterward given him for expressing his resentment.

In 1828, President John Quincy Adams appointed General Harrison Minister Plenipotentiary of the

United States, to the new republic of Colombia, and the appointment was accepted. The General reached Colombia in December, 1828, and found a state of affairs which might well have puzzled a more experienced diplomatist. Party strife raged with a bitterness which fell little short of civil war, and the military party favored a dictatorship to be assumed by the patriot leader, Simon Bolivar. The aristocratic party had imbibed a suspicious jealousy of the representative of the United States, the very simplicity of whose manners repelled them, and he was subjected to annoyances from the outset. He acquired the personal friendship of Bolivar, but the very able arguments which he addressed to that leader, on behalf of constitutional liberty, offered a lame pretext for his recall as a meddler.

General Harrison had not been a Jackson Democrat in the fierce political canvass of 1828, and the new President of the United States had hardly been sworn in, March 4th, 1829, before the recall of the Minister to Colombia was decided upon. His removal from office was unaccompanied by any suitable provision for his return to his own country, and he was permitted to get back as best he might at his own expense. Owing to the absence of commerce between the two republics, and the scarcity of vessels able to give a wandering American diplomatist a lift, three full months were consumed on the way, amid all sorts of annoyances, and General Jackson may be said to have obtained some satisfaction for Harrison's part in Clay's vote of censure.

Bolivar did not participate in the criticism made

upon the course pursued by the recalled minister, and there was afterward a friendly exchange of letters between them.

Harrison returned to a country which had undergone a political revolution. All other political factions had been temporarily submerged in the great wave of Andrew Jackson's personal ascendancy. In all the departments of government, not only at Washington but throughout the land, old incumbents were going out of office, and the hottest partisans of the new order of things were going in.

The Senate fought hard against several of Jackson's nominations, while helplessly confirming the greater part of them as fast as sent in. It was quickly understood that the President proposed to be absolute ruler of the party which he, aided by Martin Van Buren and a few other unsurpassed political managers, might be said to have created. By means of the thoroughly drilled and devoted organization they controlled, the country was to be ruled as with a rod of iron. It had great need of a strong and positive administration, with small reference to any incidental and temporary harm which that administration, guided by men of genuine ability and sincere patriotism, was at all likely to accomplish. The work before General Jackson was one of reform and consolidation, and yet there was an absolute certainty that he would exhaust his party and his popularity in doing it.

Such a man as General Harrison, dismissed from office as a pronounced opponent of the Administration, had no immediate hope for political prefer-

ment. He did not seek any, but retired to his farm at North Bend, and devoted himself to the restoration of his seriously disordered private affairs. It was a good farm, and he was a reasonably good farmer, but in that day it was not easy for any man to obtain anything more than a comfortable living from the best of land. He looked around him for the means of increasing an income which was much too narrow to meet the demands of a large and expensive family. He was ignorant of merchandise, but there was a steady sale for whiskey, and, without proper consideration of the moralities involved, he erected a distillery for the profitable consumption of his ample corn crops. It was a business experiment which his conscience shortly compelled him to abandon, and the distillery was abolished. He had been a temperate man all his life, and he now not only adopted a very practical temperance measure, but came out publicly with his reasons. He was one of the founders of the Agricultural Society of Hamilton County, Ohio, in which Cincinnati is situated, and was elected President of it soon after his return from Colombia. He delivered an address before it, at its annual meeting in 1831, in which he took strong ground, and pleaded eloquently against the vice of drunkenness and the wickedness of manufacturing whiskey. He said that he could so speak of the evil of "turning the staff of life into an article which is so destructive of health and happiness, because in that way I have sinned myself, but in that way I shall sin no more."

The temperance movement, as it now exists, had

not then begun, and it required more than ordinary courage and devotion to principle for a politician, if the General could fairly be called one, to come out alone against one of the most powerful interests of his own section and of the whole country.

The hopeless campaign against the overshadowing Jackson ascendancy, in 1832, did not draw Harrison away from his farm and his family as an aspirant for office, but his political position was definitely maintained as an anti-Jackson man and a warm supporter of Henry Clay. The needed addition to his income was provided for, however, in a manner which is very well described by the French traveller, Chevalier, in one of his published letters. He visited the Western States, and spent some time at Cincinnati.

"I had observed at the hotel table," wrote M. Chevalier, "a man about the medium height, stout and muscular, and about the age of sixty years, yet with the active step and lively air of youth. I had been struck by his open and cheerful expression, the amenity of his frank and certain air of command, which appeared in spite of his plain dress. 'That is,' said my friend, 'General Harrison, Clerk of the Cincinnati Court of Common Pleas.' 'What? General Harrison, of Tippecanoe and the Thames?' 'The same; the ex-general; the conqueror of Tecumseh and Proctor; the avenger of our disasters on the Raisin and at Detroit; the ex-Governor of the Territory of Indiana; the ex-Senator in Congress; the ex-Minister of the United States to one of the South American republics. He has grown

old in the service of his country, he has passed twenty years of his life in those fierce wars with the Indians, in which there is less glory to be won but more dangers to be encountered than at Tivoli and Austerlitz. He is now poor, with a numerous family, neglected by the Federal Government, although yet vigorous, because he had the independence to think for himself. As the opposition is in the majority here, his friends bethought themselves of coming to his relief, by removing the Clerk of Common Pleas, who was a Jackson man, and giving him the place, which is a lucrative one, as a sort of retiring pension. His friends in the East talk of making him President of the United States. Meanwhile, we have made him clerk of an inferior court.' "

The talk of a Presidential nomination referred to in the letter of M. Chevalier took definite form in the year 1836. The Jacksonian Democracy was united upon Martin Van Buren and Richard M. Johnson, while the opposition was divided. The electoral votes of Tennessee and Georgia were given to Judge White. South Carolina voted for Willie P. Mangum. Massachusetts named Daniel Webster. The Whig Party proper nominated William Henry Harrison, of Ohio, and Francis Granger, of New York, and secured for them seven States with seventy-three electoral votes. Mr. Van Buren obtained one hundred and seventy votes, and was elected, but Colonel Johnson failed of an election by the people, and one was afterward given him by the Senate. The result convinced the country that the magic of General Jackson's personal influence

had lost its power, or could not be transferred to another. At the same time it was evident that the Whig Party possessed a candidate with a strong hold upon the popular good-will. During the canvass, in 1836, General Harrison paid a visit to Philadelphia, and a grand reception had been prepared for him by his party friends. Enthusiasm ran high, for when the horses of the carriage in which he rode became restive, the shouting throng unhitched them, and themselves drew their candidate through the streets of Philadelphia.

There were four years more of steady growth for the Whig Party, favored and fostered by all the financial and other disorders of the affairs of the nation, which men could rightly or wrongly charge upon the Jackson Administration. Mr. Van Buren had inherited everything, except the old general's iron hold upon his partisans, and these were dropping away in all directions.

In the autumn of the year 1838 an anti-Masonic National Convention, representing what had for a time been a faction of considerable strength in some of the States, offered General Harrison a Presidential nomination, and he formally accepted it, for the experience of 1836 was a warning against throwing away any element of support. About a year later, the Whig Party held its National Convention at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and a large part of the delegates went to it with a strong disposition to seek success this time with Henry Clay or Daniel Webster, or even with one of several other well known, trusted, and honored statesmen. There was a com-

petition which was not without its bitternesses, but it was discovered that the kind of leadership which these men had already exercised had disqualified them for the other kind of leadership now required. Their record was too clear and pronounced with reference to vexatious questions which must be put aside or compromised for the sake of united party action.

The only candidate of sufficient prominence, whose name would not drive away a dangerously large number of votes, sectionally or otherwise, was William Henry Harrison, and a unanimous nomination was finally given him. It was even more difficult to agree upon the right man for Vice-President, and the delegates, when they went home, were altogether unable to tell upon what ground they selected John Tyler of Virginia. They did so, however, and one of the notable campaigns of American political history was soon stirring up the country. Mr. Van Buren had received a second nomination, largely through the personal influence yet exercised in his behalf by Jackson, and yet more by his own influence over the office-holding, working politicians of his party. The party itself can hardly be said to have nominated him. General Jackson did not help him at all, moreover, by a letter he wrote, and which was printed, in which he spoke slightly of General Harrison's merits as a military commander. The Whigs replied with extravagant accounts of Harrison's feats among the Indians and British, and sang songs which had choruses calling for "Tippecanoe and Tyler, too."

It was what was known as "the log-cabin campaign." Some over-critical Democratic writers, forgetting how Jackson had been elected, described Harrison as a rough frontiersman, who lived in a log cabin at North Bend, and drank nothing but hard cider. That was worth thousands of votes to the Whigs. They carried log cabins in their processions, struck and distributed numberless log-cabin medals, and the barbecues they held everywhere in imitation of the tactics by means of which Martin Van Buren and his helpers had built up the Jacksonian Democracy, were supplied with unlimited cider. The political questions to be decided by the election were differently explained by stump-speakers in different localities, and it may be that not many men could have been found capable of telling definitely what they were. There is not anybody now living who could do so. It was a log-cabin campaign, and it was a magnificent success. The Democratic Party gave Mr. Van Buren one million one hundred and twenty-six thousand one hundred and thirty-seven votes, and enough of them joined the opposition to give Harrison and Tyler one million two hundred and sixty-nine thousand seven hundred and sixty-three votes. The nominal Whig majority was only a hundred and forty-three thousand six hundred and forty-six, but this was so distributed among the States that, when the electoral votes were counted, Harrison and Tyler had two hundred and thirty-four out of two hundred and ninety-four votes. It was a majority forming less than six per cent of the whole vote, and would have

been lost if the Whig leaders had neglected any of the several political elements which they were able to combine for that election only under General Harrison.

It was another political revolution, and the Whig Party leaders determined to make the most of it. With one voice they demanded of Harrison that their party opponents should be removed from every office, great or small, to which his power extended. They proposed a proscription even more sweeping than Jackson's had been, and with tenfold better cause. Men who had obtained places for party services, and held them as party servants, had no personal right to complain, if they were dismissed when their places were needed for similar payments to other men. The injury done was to the entire nation. It was a most pernicious system, full of harm to the public service, but its evils were overlooked by patriotic men in the struggle for power, and a clean sweep was determined upon.

The President-elect found that the most harassing and fatiguing part of the toils before him began with his election rather than with his inauguration.

The genius and imperious will of Henry Clay, the towering intellectual strength of Daniel Webster, the learning, the capacity, the experience and high reputation of at least a dozen other Whig leaders, made it impossible for any man less than a miracle in human form to be the controlling head of such a party. Harrison was a man of excellent abilities and accustomed to command, but some of these men were head and shoulders above him in all the

essential elements of statesmanship. When he made Daniel Webster Secretary of State, and filled the other seats in his Cabinet with strong men, he hoped for some relief from the pressure of his new and strange position, but the desired improvement was not obtained. He discovered that the acknowledged leader of the party, Henry Clay, had not yielded one tittle of his assumed right to be almost obeyed by any Whig who might happen to become President. It was an utter impossibility to appoint all men to all offices, or to satisfy the great party leaders whose claims were daily and hourly pressing.

March 4th, 1841, arrived, and William Henry Harrison was duly inaugurated President of the United States. He was sixty-eight years old, and while he still seemed erect and vigorous, he had lost the elasticity which had distinguished him, and he experienced somewhat the effects of his earlier toils and exposures. He took up with anxious energy the perplexing duty of reappointing the civil service of the United States in a manner to satisfy the conflicting demands of the men who had elected him. The position and course of his administration, its measures and its policy, at home and abroad, were in other hands than his, and his perception of that fact did not at all diminish his deep sense of responsibility. It was a tremendous change from the quiet of North Bend and the humdrum routine duties of the Cincinnati Court of Common Pleas. The Executive Mansion was daily beset and besieged by swarms of hungry office-seekers. The

Treasury was in a condition which demanded prompt legislative relief. The defeated Democracy, through its party press, was heaping vituperation upon the man who was removing so many Democrats from office. Extreme factionists, North and South, were clamorously demanding of the new Administration some act or voice committing it for or against the annexation of Texas, a national bank, a new tariff, no tariff, the extension of slavery into the Territories and other points of policy. The new President could not storm like Andrew Jackson, and he had not the cool tact of Martin Van Buren. He could receive all visitors with kindly courtesy and listen to whatever might be said, and then he lacked the faculty of subsequently putting away from him any undue interest created. His family had not come to Washington with him, intending to remain at North Bend until Summer, and it may be that the old man missed the home care and comfort to which he was accustomed. In less than three weeks he was visibly failing, and by March 25th he was really ill, although he refused to so consider himself. On the 27th he had a severe chill. He had been caught in a shower while taking a walk, and what seemed a slight cold had been hanging around him. It had been, in fact, the first stages of pneumonia, and the strength to resist it with was wasted in work, and worry, and anxiety. By the first day of April he was confined to his bed, but even then his attending physicians did not apprehend a fatal result. They were dealing only with pneumonia—that is, with a disorder of the body, when to the

destructive power of this was added the feverish drain upon the vital forces which went on through the President's overtaxed mind. He sank rapidly, and on April 4th, just one month after his inauguration, he closed his eyes forever. Toward the end, he said to his physicians: "My last wish is that the principles of the Government shall be carried out. I ask nothing more."

He did not know it, but he had worn himself out at last in an overstrained effort to fulfil that very patriotic aspiration.

The death of President Harrison produced a profound effect upon the startled nation. There were imposing funeral ceremonies at Washington, and special religious services were held in many churches throughout the country. He had never been a church-member, although a professed believer of the Christian religion, but when he came to Washington had declared his intention of uniting publicly at an early day with the Episcopal Church, to which his views were inclined.

Immediately on assuming office, President Tyler issued a proclamation appointing May 14th, 1841, a day of national fasting and prayer, on account of the great loss which the country had sustained, and it was all the more generally observed, because a large part of the people were full of foreboding anxiety concerning the consequences of the sudden change in the control of public affairs.

The family of General Harrison had been large. At the time of his death, his wife, one son, and three married daughters were living, while three

sons and a daughter had reached maturity, had married and had passed away before him.

The man who was President for one month is generally better remembered in connection with the name of Tecumseh, but his real title to lasting honor is not as a party leader or as a successful general, but as the best and greatest of Indian Commissioners, and as the pioneer Governor of the Indiana Territory.

Lives of the Presidents of the United States.

JOHN TYLER.

TENTH PRESIDENT

BY WILLIAM O. STODDARD.

CHAPTER I.

The Tyler Family—Birth of John Tyler—Early Education—Admitted to the Bar—Sent to the State Legislature—Elected to Congress—Old-Time Politics.

THE leading families of the Virginia colony were for the greater part aristocratic and royalist in their origin and tendencies. There were a few exceptions, such as the Cromwellian Harrisons, and men of yeoman ancestry, like the Jeffersons. It was therefore somewhat remarkable that the successive stages of the stormy progress toward an armed resistance of kingly authority developed so very few Tories in the loyal Old Dominion. Quite a number of individuals of rank and distinction did, indeed, refuse, to the very last, to surrender their allegiance to the British Crown, and some of them sailed away in the fleet which received as a fugitive the last royal governor.

There were, however, sufficiently good reasons why the list of Tory families was not larger. The struggle for colonial independence retained, year after year, the form of a strictly lawful opposition to obnoxious measures, which the colonists persistently attributed to the King's ministers and not to the King himself. Nearly every prominent man in Virginia was a rebel against the ministry, before he dreamed of being a rebel of any other kind. The Lexington fight and the siege of Boston and the burning of Norfolk were required to cure the extreme loyalism of scores of the great landed proprietors and other social magnates.

Among the families carried along by the growing tide of patriotism were the Tylers. One of them had been marshal of the colony by royal appointment, and his son, John Tyler, became at an early age a member of the House of Burgesses. He was re-elected, year after year, to discuss with Harrison, and Pendleton, and Randolph, and Colonel Washington, and other dignified colonial gentlemen, the outrageous conduct of the King's ministers and the great danger lest the turbulent Massachusetts men, particularly the mob of Boston, should carry their practical protests too far. At last they were all called upon to consider the Boston Port Bill, and to hear the burning words of Patrick Henry. Then stout Ben Harrison, Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates, was sent to the Continental Congress, and John Tyler was chosen to succeed him as Speaker.

During all the War of the Revolution and after-

ward, John Tyler continued to hold an influential position among the public men of Virginia. His wife, Mary Armistead, was also of patriotic ancestry and connections. Although a lawyer in good practice, Mr. Tyler was not a rich man, for fees were small in those days. He held some property at Charles City, Charles City County, where he resided, and here, on March 29th, 1790, was born a son, named after him, John Tyler, who was in due time to become President of the United States.

Childhood and boyhood were pleasant days for a little Virginian whose life began in such a home. He knew but little of the troubles of the period of doubt and difficulty which immediately followed the war for independence, and he was only a six-year-old boy when George Washington delivered his Farewell Address. Education began at home, in a manner which made all subsequent opportunities of greater value, and these also were in due season provided for him. From the very cradle he was put into a course of training, intentionally or not, which was sure to give him an ambition for following in the footsteps of his father. He exhibited tokens of more than ordinary capacity, even in boyhood. His memory was excellent, he was fond of books, he was industrious, and he readily mastered the not very severe course of studies required to prepare him for admission to the College of William and Mary. Here also he acquitted himself uncommonly well for so young a student, and was graduated in the year 1806, a scholar while yet a boy.

A professional career was in perfect readiness for

him, and he had no other idea than that he had been born to be a lawyer and rise to eminence at the Virginia bar. He at once began the study of the law in his father's office, but still in connection with the university. He was fond of the pleasant society which on all sides opened its doors to him, and in which his ready wit, self-possession, and kindly, easy manners, made him exceedingly popular; but he did not permit it to draw him too much away from his dryer duties. Dry enough was the work before a law student in those days, but with such peculiar advantages it was a matter of course that young Tyler should be early admitted to practice. The law was not the only profession for which he had been preparing, and upon the active practice of which he was about to enter. By natural gifts, training, association, inheritance, and by all the eager aspirations of his young ambition, John Tyler was a politician.

His father, the former Speaker of the rebel House of Burgesses, was a warm supporter of Jefferson and Madison, and, in the year 1808, the people of Virginia made him Governor of the State. By that very vote they gave his son and law student an important step in the ladder of political promotion. The young man had already made his mark as a fluent stump orator, an ardent Jeffersonian. It was easy to obtain for him a nomination to the Assembly, and he was elected, and took his seat when he was barely twenty-one years of age.

Five years of consecutive service in the Legislature, alternated with the duties of an increasing law

practice, followed that first election. Beginning with a social, political, and professional position won for him by his father, the young man's ambition found no important barrier in its way except the fact that his native State seemed to swarm with brilliant youths eager for distinction, while it was also rich in middle-aged and elderly gentlemen, whose names and services were identified with the national history, and who seemed in little haste to make room for their juniors.

Mr. Tyler's party did not enjoy an undisputed ascendancy, however, and had need of young and vigorous partisans of thorough training and good capacity. He was a peculiarly effective and very popular stump speaker in campaign after campaign, and his continuous services received full recognition. In the year 1816 he was elected to the United States House of Representatives, taking his seat as one of its youngest members. Among all its new men, however, there could not have been a considerable number, young or old, who had served a more thorough political apprenticeship.

The years of his membership of the Virginia Assembly had included the stirring events of the War of 1812, the campaigns of Harrison and Jackson, treaties with England and with other powers, and the rapid development of the Western country. The freedom of the seas had been acquired for American commerce, and the United States had been fully recognized as a member of the family of nations. Great changes had taken place in the affairs of Europe. Old kingdoms and dynasties had

disappeared, or had passed through great revolutions, and new States had risen. The face of the whole world had undergone a sort of transformation since John Tyler's father had presided over the Virginia Legislature, and even since the young man's own election as a member of that body, American politics had drifted on into the first stage of an entirely new era.

The old Federal Party, which had broken down hopelessly at the first election of Thomas Jefferson, maintained its organization with slowly-yielding obstinacy until the Presidential campaign of 1816. It was able to oppose James Monroe in the electoral college of that year, with but thirty-four votes against one hundred and eighty-three. So evident was it to the minds of all men that the lost ground of party power could never be regained, that the Federal leaders, as if with one accord, gave the matter up, and all but a very few of them retired from public life. The younger men, who had for a time acted with them, afterward found themselves very willing to forget it, and anxious that others should do the same. In the earlier years of the Monroe Administration there seemed to be no party lines in existence. The country was prosperous ; its Western and Southern wildernesses were settling fast ; its commerce was rapidly extending ; the people were weary of turmoils and strifes, of embargoes and wars. The "era of good feeling" had come, and old enemies believed themselves to have put away worn-out animosities forever. Sectional bitterness seemed to slumber, and the head of Monroe's

Cabinet was John Quincy Adams, son of the last Federalist President. There were as many anti-slavery men in Virginia as in Massachusetts, and the "State Rights" school of politicians were as outspoken in New England as in South Carolina.

The old leaders, even of the Republican Party, were rapidly passing away, and as yet the new men, with a few notable exceptions, were coming to the front slowly. These exceptions were in every instance men whose position grew out of their course with reference to the War of 1812. Either, like Henry Clay and Martin Van Buren, they had been prominent as war advocates, in National or State Legislatures, or, like Andrew Jackson and William Henry Harrison, they had successfully led armies in the field. John Tyler had no known relations whatever to the War of 1812, and there were no great public questions under discussion to which he could at once attach his name as advocate or opponent.

If a person visiting the city of Washington, at the present day, while Congress is in session, will go to the Capitol, enter the House of Representatives, and look around him, he will see some twenty scores of very intelligent-looking gentlemen. Among them, here and there, he will find a face whose printed portraits have made him familiar with it. Some friend standing by may be able to give him the names of a dozen or twenty more who have attained national reputations and are looked upon as men of exceptional capacity and influence.

If he should ask concerning all the remainder,

“Who are they?” a perfect answer would be, “They are John Tyler. Each is a man of sufficient note in his own district to be selected as its representative ; each has his work to do in his committees, and his voice may sometimes be heard upon the floor ; each, however, is the member of a party and of a faction in a party, and his vote is generally as well ascertained before he has given it as afterward. Not one of them has ever as yet originated any brilliant or startling piece of legislation. The great majority of them are men of education and practical ability, and can make good and even eloquent speeches. Any man among them may yet be President, but you can’t name him.”

Congress contained fewer men in the days of James Monroe than it does now, and its minor individuals were not so completely hidden in a crowd. John Tyler’s course was closely watched by his constituents, and was to most of them fairly satisfactory. He was comparatively poor, but his social position was good, and his genial disposition and polished manners made him welcome in the best circles of the capital, including the brilliant drawing rooms of Mrs. Monroe.

There was something almost monotonous in American political life during the years 1816 and 1817, although it was known that Mr. Monroe and Mr. Adams were negotiating for the purchase of Florida from Spain, and although leading men were striving anxiously to discover what might be their own views, and those of the people concerning the tariff and internal improvements. The United

States Bank was for the time somewhat in the background. Early in the year 1818, however, the general quiet received a severe shaking, and a great deal was done for the party politics of the future.

President Monroe instructed General Jackson to gather a sufficient number of riflemen, and suppress the hostile Creeks and Seminoles of the Southern border. The order was obeyed with the most unlooked-for vigor. The Indians were chastised thoroughly, but they were also pursued across the line into Spanish territory, a Spanish fort was taken, and, worse than that, two Englishmen, named Arbuthnot and Ambrister, were hanged upon a charge of inciting Indian hostilities.

The Administration was exceedingly annoyed and puzzled, with the exception of John Quincy Adams, who fully approved of General Jackson's action, but the President adopted so skilfully indefinite a position that his nominal political supporters were left entirely free to take one side or the other of the stormy disputes which followed. They divided, accordingly. The proper committees brought forward in House and Senate resolutions of disapproval. In the Upper House these lay upon the table until they were forgotten. In the Lower House they were discussed in a debate which lasted almost a month, nearly all the speakers declaring or admitting that Jackson had exceeded authority, and disregarded legal technicalities, but nearly all joining eulogy with their criticisms. The final vote was in the General's favor, but he never forgave the men

who voted against him, no matter how much praise they added to their adverse decision. Among those who at this time were made to range themselves as his opponents were Henry Clay and General Harrison. Among those who did not do so was John Tyler.

During that same winter session of 1818-19, the slavery question first became dangerously prominent. The bill for the admission of Missouri as a State of the Union came before Congress, and was defeated because of the clause in its proposed constitution permitting the introduction of slaves. There were very few Abolitionists in the country, and not any in Congress, but a clear majority of the people of the North, and a very respectable minority of the people of the South, were opposed to the extension of what they perceived to be a growing peril. Both at the North and at the South, however, there was yet another class of men who believed in the right of each State and of each community organizing as a State, to regulate its domestic institutions in the manner its own majority of voters might decide. Among these was General Harrison, and Mr. Tyler himself took the same ground, rather than as an extreme advocate of slavery or its extension. He was not, however, like John Quincy Adams, in any doubt as to his views upon the main question of the right of the Federal Government to meddle with the subject of human bondage. In his opinion, then and afterward, a State boundary line protected all the affairs of whatever nature belonging to the several commonwealths from any interfer-

ence not explicitly provided for by the Constitution of the United States. He was what was called a "strict Constructionist," and his whole political career and conduct must be judged with reference to the doctrine which was as his corner-stone. Every tendency toward a centralization of the power of the Republic, in the hands of the President or of Congress, was sure to be jealously watched and zealously opposed by every man who had been confirmed in "strict construction" principles.

Propositions for internal improvements, to be made by the Federal Government, were by such men regarded as so many covert assaults upon the reserved rights of the States. They had at first accepted the Constitution doubtfully, and had been slow to yield each separate power contained in it, even that of regulating commerce.

With reference to a Bank of the United States, as the central office of branches in the several States, Mr. Tyler's views were not clear at the beginning, but they became so as soon as a constitutional point was made in its favor by what all State rights men regarded as a usurpation of undue authority by President Jackson.

During Mr. Tyler's term of service in Congress, his position became fairly well defined upon nearly all of the new questions arising, so far as their shape permitted. At the same time he earned for himself a reputation as a prompt and capable debater, and as an industrious, well-informed, and capable legislator. If he did not go beyond that, it might well be said that there had been no opportunity given

him. He acquired a familiar acquaintance with national affairs, made friendships, enjoyed himself socially, and seemed to have attained a very enviable degree of advancement for a politician, who was, after all, so very young.

CHAPTER II.

The Political Situation—State Rights and Strict Construction—Adams and Jackson—John Tyler Governor of Virginia—United States Senator—Webster and Hayne—Nullification—Tyler's Vote Against the Force Bill—Re-elected.

THE close of Mr. Monroe's first term as President of the United States found the country still destitute of political parties. The Republican Party had apparently absorbed all factions, and men in Congress were curiously free to vote very much as they pleased. They acted for or against the measures which, from time to time, were favored by the administration of Mr. Monroe, without any prejudice whatever relating to him. When his time came for the re-election believed to be his due, there was no faction worth naming which had the will or the presumption to oppose him. His personal popularity was phenomenal. He had made extended tours through the country, North and South, and had everywhere been received in a manner utterly discouraging to any possible rival. There was, therefore, no considerable resistance to him, and the electoral college of the year 1820 contained but one dissenting voice.

Mr. Tyler's district, nevertheless, was ready for a change in its representation in Congress, and he was

almost as willing to return to his neglected law practice. In the year 1821 he was once more hard at work in the Virginia courts adding materially to his income, and at the same time rapidly increasing his reputation as a lawyer. His personal popularity was deservedly great, for no man who met him could fail to perceive that his kindness of manner was the expression of genuine benevolence of disposition. He was liberal to a fault, and peculiarly given to the hospitalities which Virginia society delighted in. All men liked John Tyler, and a large majority of the people of Virginia were in very fair accord with his extreme views upon State rights and the construction of the Constitution. They were the abstract doctrines of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison carried out to conclusions, which were probably never reached by either of those statesmen, but which were yet described by political leaders in other States as those of "the Virginia school." These doctrines had no better representative than Mr. Tyler, and that fact was one day to become of national importance.

The four years of Mr. Monroe's second term did not belong to the "era of good feeling," for the party which had held together so well during six successive Presidential terms was rapidly going to pieces.

Mr. Tyler was a strict Constructionist in party matters, as well as in constitutional law, and was pretty sure to be found with that particular fragment of the general party wreck which might seem to have the best claim to be considered the old ship

itself. When, therefore, a regular Congressional caucus, such as had nominated Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, came together and nominated William H. Crawford, of Georgia, Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Tyler gave him his support, overlooking the somewhat narrow membership of the caucus, and was instrumental in giving him the undivided vote of the State of Virginia.

Mr. Crawford claimed to be a perfect representative of pure Republicanism, to be the regular nominee of the party, and, at the same time, to stand for State rights and the peculiar interests of the South. Shortly after the vote of the Congressional caucus, however, the Legislature of Tennessee nominated Andrew Jackson. The friends of John Quincy Adams had put him before the people as in a manner entitled to the succession, and as an avowed enemy of the caucus system.

The supporters of John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina, correctly asserted that he was every whit as zealous a defender of Southern interests as any other man could be. Henry Clay, of Kentucky, was also nominated, as a man who had strong claims upon the party and the nation. Other candidates named at first were shortly withdrawn, and the aim of Mr. Calhoun changed to the Vice-Presidency, which he obtained by an overwhelming majority. When the electoral votes for President were counted, Mr. Tyler's candidate, Mr. Crawford, stood third, with only forty-one votes. Below him was Henry Clay, with thirty-seven votes. Next above him was John Quincy Adams, with eighty-

four votes, and at the head of the list was Andrew Jackson, with ninety-one. Well might an outsider have asked, "Which of these lists of votes represents the Republican Party?"

Neither of them did so. The House of Representatives gave the Presidency to John Quincy Adams, but there were many reasons why the "Virginia school" of statesmen and politicians could not be expected to support his administration. John Tyler and all men who agreed with him were sure to keenly scrutinize every public measure of a man whom they declared to have been born a Federalist, and who was known to believe in a liberal interpretation of the Constitution. When, shortly after the inauguration of Mr. Adams, the Tennessee Legislature once more nominated Andrew Jackson as a Presidential candidate, Mr. Tyler and his associates fell into rank at once with the new movement. They were not at all aware that, in so doing, they accepted a leader with no reverence for any constitutional interpretation, or for any State line which was greater than that which he had already shown for the boundary of Spanish Florida.

The House of Representatives did not reach a solution of the electoral problem sent to it by the division of the votes of the colleges among the four candidates, until February 9th, 1825. General Jackson had believed himself the choice of the people, had expected to be also the choice of the House, and was bitterly disappointed. He remained in Washington long enough to witness the inauguration of Mr. Adams, and, as the oldest member of

the Senate, to administer the oath of office to Vice-President Calhoun. Soon afterward he returned to his Hermitage home, resigned his place in the United States Senate, and accepted the renewed Presidential nomination enthusiastically given him by the Legislature of Tennessee.

The Jackson movement quickened and strengthened all the opposition in Congress to the administration of President Adams. There was a hardly accountable degree of sectional jealousy arrayed against him from the West and South, and it watched and criticised him as narrowly as did the strict Constructionists themselves.

There were other elements at the North, in the Middle States, and elsewhere, commercial, social, and political, with some pretty lively sectionalism in New England, that were also sure to rally to his support, if he should ask for a second term as President, and it was not possible for any man to make a trustworthy estimate of the relative strength of the opposing forces.

There was one important element of party success which Mr. Adams neglected, while the most was made of it on behalf of his opponent. General Jackson could count among his friends at the West a number of exceedingly capable party managers. In the North, his long canvass was under the masterly management of Martin Van Buren. In Virginia, the Andrew Jackson party followed the leadership at once assumed by John Tyler. No man better understood the people of the South, and particularly of his own State, and the new party there was

soon in almost as well disciplined a condition as in New York or Tennessee. In the first year of the Adams Administration, 1825, it was able to elect John Tyler Governor of Virginia.

The new governor did not propose to confine his attention to the affairs of the Old Dominion. The popular mind was busy with questions of national policy. In December, 1826, Governor Tyler sent to the Legislature a message in which he vigorously denounced all measures for internal improvements under Federal direction, and set forth his well-known views of the reserved rights of the States. So far as it went, it was in full accord with doctrines afterward declared to Congress, and to the country, by Andrew Jackson.

The great Presidential campaign went steadily on for another year, and a Jacksonian success was believed to be won, when, January 13th, 1827, John Tyler was elected to the Senate of the United States for six years, from March 4th following.

When the new Senator from Virginia took his seat, not many men in the United States could have been named whose honorable success in life had been greater. He had attained a position and a reputation which fell just a little short of making him one of the foremost men of the nation. Without being a great lawyer, he stood high at the Virginia bar, among a group of uncommonly able jurists. He was not a great orator, but was yet a debater of such ability and skill that he did not appear to disadvantage when defending his positive views against the most eloquent men of his time. What rank he

was to win or lose as a far seeing statesman was yet to be determined. He began his career in the Senate as a man whose settled convictions made him the opponent of an administration headed by John Quincy Adams, with Henry Clay, the high-tariff advocate, as Secretary of State.

The supporters of General Jackson worked hard in every corner of the country, while Mr. Adams and his friends did comparatively little to secure for him a re-election.

In Congress, as among the people, there were now once more two distinct parties, although many men were not entirely sure which of them was best entitled to be called the Republican Party. Perhaps the doubt was due, in large part, to the fact that neither faction had yet held a National Convention, or declared its principles and doctrines in set terms.

The social life of the city of Washington had a character of its own in those days. Mr. and Mrs. Adams did not keep open house, and there was an air of New England quietness in the hospitalities of the Executive Mansion. The tone of other circles was that of the old Virginia and Maryland aristocracy, readily adopted by ladies and gentlemen from the North.

The representatives of the West and Southwest found their places very much according to their individual tastes and characters, and some of their coteries were such as Colonel Davy Crockett, the Arkansas bear hunter, felt entirely at home in. Senator and ex-Governor John Tyler, representative of an old Virginia family, a polished gentleman, with

an accomplished wife, was regarded as a distinguished member of the most dignified society of the Capital, the only drawback being the fact that he was still in moderate pecuniary circumstances.

There was a great deal of business done in the United States in the year 1828, but there was not as much legislative work as usual performed in Congress. Members of both Senate and House were more deeply interested in the party struggle than in any measure which might be brought before them. It was a campaign of bitter personal vituperation and animosities. The public press reeked with coarse calumnies of public men, in which not even their wives and families were spared. Everybody had cause for rejoicing when it was all over, although the result was a surprise to all but a very few.

John Quincy Adams received eighty-three electoral votes in 1828, not one of them from a State south of the Potomac River. Andrew Jackson received one hundred and seventy-eight votes, only one of them from New England. The Middle States, excepting the Jackson vote of Pennsylvania, were divided, and the West went solidly for the hero of New Orleans. There was something ominous in the sectional features of the election returns. There was more in the character of the debates, which soon afterward began upon the floors of both Houses of Congress.

The most pressing business before the Senate, after General Jackson took the oath of office as President, was in the shape of long lists of nominations of Jacksonian politicians to the offices at the

disposal of the Administration. Never before, in the history of the country, had there been anything at all like it, and the General's wrath was shortly excited by the fact that the Senate presumed to discuss and criticise the men whose appointments he asked them to confirm. They actually rejected a few, but, before the work given them was completed, Mr. Tyler and his Democratic fellow Senators had aided in removing about six hundred and ninety public servants, with their local clerks and other subordinates.

Even while that was going on, however, the President had made some pretty distinct announcements of the policy he proposed for his administration.

Upon the subject of State rights, he was vaguely and very incorrectly supposed to be in accord with John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina, elected Vice-President upon the same ticket with himself, and now for a time high in his esteem and confidence. Even John Tyler could have asked no more than that the President should listen to Mr. Calhoun.

General Jackson's course in Congress while a member, and some things that he had said and written afterward, had indicated a leaning toward a protective tariff and internal improvements, but there was nothing of importance about them in his inaugural address, March 4th, 1829. There was not much in it, in fact, for anybody to either praise highly or find much fault with. When Congress re-assembled, in the following December, however, he was ready to say that the condition of the Treasury

was so good that it was time to reduce the duties upon tea and coffee—two articles not produced in this country—and that recommendation looked like protectionism.

The John Tyler school of politicians were watching narrowly, and another clause in the same message suited them better. It suggested that any surplus which might probably be some day found in the Treasury, should be divided among the States, by them to be spent in public improvements. He added :

“ Nothing is clearer in my view than that we are chiefly indebted for the success of the Constitution under which we are now acting, to the watchful and auxiliary operation of the State authorities.”

The message dealt with Indian affairs and other subjects, and took no ground with reference to any of them upon which many men were likely to quarrel with it, but it touched one subject of peculiar delicacy. It referred to the fact that the charter of the Bank of the United States would expire in the year 1836, that a renewal would doubtless be asked for, and added : “ Both the constitutionality and the expediency of the law creating this bank are questioned by a large portion of our fellow-citizens, and it must be admitted by all that it has failed in the great end of establishing a uniform and sound currency.”

More was suggested, with a semblance of moderation which veiled the intense antagonism behind it, but it was a kind of declaration of war, nevertheless,

and with reference to this point also John Tyler at first found himself in apparent accord with General Jackson.

The Administration had an overwhelming majority, nominally, in the Senate, and its candidate for Speaker of the House had received one hundred and fifty-two votes out of one hundred and ninety-one. The action of the Senate upon confirmations quickly declared the unsubmissive character of the majority there, and it was soon discovered that the House of Representatives contained a number of men who had voted for Jackson, yet now proposed to vote as they pleased, especially for a United States Bank and for internal improvements. Some of them were also high-tariff men, while a larger number considered State rights an abstract question.

That part of the President's Message relating to the bank was referred in the House of Representatives to the Committee of Ways and Means, who shortly reported strongly against the President, and in favor of the bank. Before the session was over, four anti-bank resolutions were quietly laid upon the table, and permitted to stay there.

Several measures relating to the tariff were brought before Congress, and with reference to them the people of Georgia and other Southern States sent in very earnest protests against the protective system, as hurtful to their own and other agricultural interests.

Various measures for spending money from an overflowing Treasury in prosecuting great works of public improvement were also pending, and in the

debates upon them John Tyler added materially to his reputation as an orator and statesman.

The debates in Congress had thus far been conducted with a fair degree of good temper and prudence, although extreme views and sectional feeling had found occasional expression. From parts of the South, however, and notably from South Carolina, there had been reports of an exceedingly bitter and excited opposition to the existing tariff, and it was even asserted that serious trouble was brewing.

The unquestioned leader of the strict Constructionists, in Congress and before the country, was John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina. It was generally well known that Mr. Tyler was as extreme in his opinions, or nearly so; but decidedly the most eloquent advocate upon that side, Calhoun being in the chair as presiding officer, was Senator Hayne, of South Carolina. One day Senator Samuel A. Foot, of Connecticut, introduced a resolution proposing an inquiry into the expediency of suspending the sale of public lands for a time. There were legal and other points involved which gave Mr. Hayne an opportunity for a speech in which he set forth with his accustomed ability the position of the State rights theorists. He said, in the course of it: "I am one of those who believe that the very life of our system is the independence of the States, and that there is no evil more to be deprecated than the consolidation of this Government."

The two most dangerous words were "independence" and "consolidation." The next day Daniel Webster began his famous speech in reply to Mr.

Hayne, and before it was ended Mr. Tyler and his friends felt that the political ground under them had been badly shaken.

There was another shock coming. Year after year it had been the custom in Washington to celebrate the birthday of Thomas Jefferson, April 13th, by a public dinner. The arrangements for the occasion, in the spring of 1830, were in the hands of the strict Constructionist leaders, and they determined to make a political use of it. They prepared the regular toasts in such a manner that any of them could have been given by Mr. Hayne or Mr. Tyler, while some of them could not have been given by Mr. Webster without important modifications. The President had been invited, and was present, and the first volunteer toast was expected from him. He gave one full of meaning: "Our Federal Union : It must be preserved." Mr. Calhoun gave, as the next volunteer toast, "The Union : Next to our liberty the most dear ; may we all remember that it can only be preserved by respecting the rights of the States, and distributing equally the benefit and burden of the Union."

He had fairly returned the blow so evidently aimed at the position his political faction was assuming, but he had by no means parried its effect. The President had declared, in a condensed form, his determination to regard the asserted rights of States as altogether secondary to those of the nation. Federalism itself had never dared to speak so plainly, not being General Jackson. The patriotic sentiment he had given was printed in all the news-

papers, and was everywhere accepted as a keynote of his purpose and policy with reference to any manner of State resistance to Federal legislation. Nine tenths of the population, North and South, responded with enthusiastic acquiescence, and the General's personal hold upon their confidence was vastly strengthened.

The question of State rights was not yet before Congress in any definite form, and the next important act of the President called for the concurrence of all strict Constructionists. About a month later in the session, a sort of test bill passed both Houses. It provided for the construction of a highway for the benefit of the Western people, and was known as the Maysville and Lexington Road Bill. The President vetoed it, and in his message returning it said that there should be no public money spent for internal improvements prior to the extinguishing of the national debt, nor until the Constitution should be so amended as to confer due authority upon Congress for that kind of legislation.

Mr. Tyler had fought the Road Bill zealously in the Senate, and was now an obstinate member of the minority, which was still strong enough to sustain the veto. Three more bills of the same description were passed during that session. Of these the President returned one, with a veto message, and retained two after Congress adjourned, killing them quietly by what was called a "pocket veto."

A breach between General Jackson and Mr. Calhoun had begun in a manner which the latter could not understand, and he even attributed the Presi-

dent's increasing coolness to some hidden, private influence. It was growing wider now, and Mr. Tyler and all other State rights men were drifting away with their leader. If they agreed with the President concerning internal improvements, his views upon a protective tariff were at best indefinite, and were too definite altogether as to the reserved rights of States. Mr. Tyler had been willing to agree with General Jackson's preliminary criticisms of the Bank of the United States. He could see a possibility for improvement in that institution and in its management. Very speedily, however, a point of departure was reached in the Jacksonian exercise of assumed Executive authority, beyond which no strict Constructionist could go without a sacrifice of principles.

As General Jackson pressed his war against the bank, therefore, one occasion after another found John Tyler voting side by side with Henry Clay against measures of the Administration. There were minor features of the President's course, such as the grotesque Eaton affair, by which his first Cabinet was broken up, that a gentleman of Mr. Tyler's personal character and social position was likely to watch with quiet derision, rather than with any stronger feeling. That, for instance, was disgraceful ; but it had its funny side, and Mr. Tyler loved fun. He and many other men, however, looked forward with anxiety to the session of Congress, which was to begin with the close of the year 1831. It was true that the country was prosperous, and that the Treasury was overflowing, but the assertion

was freely made at the South that the prosperity did not include that section, and that the Treasury surplus was piled up with money unjustly wrung from Southern agriculture for the benefit of Northern manufacturers.

There were yet louder murmurs and angrier threats of trouble to come, unless the wrong complained of should be righted. At the same time it was understood that the United States Bank was about to try conclusions with Andrew Jackson, and proposed to determine the nature and extent of Executive influence in Congress.

That this had become seriously impaired was manifested when the Senate, after confirming the President's new Cabinet, came to a tie vote upon Mr. Van Buren's nomination as Minister to England. Vice-President Calhoun and his friends, among them notably Mr. Tyler, regarded Mr. Van Buren as the subtle agent by whose machinations the President had been turned against them. Mr. Calhoun's casting vote as Vice-President was therefore unwisely given against the nomination, and Mr. Van Buren was recalled from England just in time to supplant his enemy, and become himself Vice-President.

The action of the State rights men and their leader was an open declaration of war, and ranged them definitely with the opposition, although they still asserted their Democratic-Republicanism, and claimed an independent position. The session was as exciting as had been expected. The protective tariff advocates disregarded the threatening attitude

of Southern discontent, and their measures had the support of many avowed friends of the Administration.

The representatives of the Bank of the United States were able to rally majorities of both Houses of Congress in favor of a renewal of the bank charter, but there their triumph ended. The President vetoed their bill in a very able message, and its supporters failed to pass it over the veto.

Throughout the stormy debates of the session, Mr. Tyler added to the reputation he had won, and if his course was defiantly hostile to the policy of the Administration, it by no means injured his relations to the main body of his party in his own State. It was shortly to be discovered that he well understood the existing sentiment of his constituents, and what importance, more or less, they ascribed to the bank question, as compared with those of State rights and the tariff.

The Jackson Democratic National Convention met at Baltimore, on May 21st, 1832, to give the General a formal nomination for a second term as President. There was really little doubt concerning his election, although the friends of the bank confidently prophesied his defeat. In spite of all that could be done by the opponents of Mr. Van Buren, the convention named him as its candidate for Vice-President.

Only a fragment of the rebellion within the old party lines was as yet prepared to take independent action. South Carolina voted on election day for candidates of her own selection, John Floyd, of Vir-

ginia, and Henry Lee, of Massachusetts. The Vermont opposition, made up of all sorts, gave the voice of that State to William Wirt, of Maryland, and Amos Ellmaker, of Pennsylvania.

The first votes of what was afterward the Whig Party, forty-nine in number, from six States, were given to Clay and Sargent. The great mass of the Democratic Party, including most of its strict Constructionists, adhered to the regular party nominations, and gave General Jackson two hundred and nineteen electoral votes. Mr. Van Buren received a hundred and eighty-nine, and was elected. The second term of the Jackson Administration, therefore, began with an emphatic declaration that the people were with the President.

The drift of the several political elements could be understood a year or so later, but not so easily in 1832. Up to the re-election of General Jackson, Mr. Tyler had so guided his course in all votes and speeches, that he could and did declare himself more soundly a Jeffersonian Republican, more entitled to be called a Democrat, than was the President himself.

The completeness of General Jackson's victory at the November polls had been a surprise to the supporters of the Bank of the United States, but it did not discourage them entirely, nor prevent them from gathering all their resources for a new struggle in Congress. They were now, moreover, sure of an increased support from the strict Constructionists, for the strength of that faction was visibly increasing, and it was taking a position which threatened war upon

every feature and part of the Jackson Administration.

Before long the bank advocates counted Mr. Tyler as altogether one of themselves, but his votes and speeches upon the various phases of that question were as yet of minor consequence to himself and to the nation. The battle for the charter, with its defeats or victories, was in the hands of other men, and all gains or losses were also theirs.

It was in the debates upon the tariff that the Virginia Senator at this time attained a prominence not before assigned to him. In the course of the session of 1832, Henry Clay made one of his greatest speeches, continuing through three consecutive days to set before the Senate, with all the power of his eloquence, the blessings which the nation was receiving and was yet to obtain from a system which protected its growing industries from the fatal rivalries of European production.

No other man responded to Mr. Clay with greater force or effect than did John Tyler. There was something more than mere logic and oratory behind his energetic declarations, for he uttered the voice of a sorely discontented constituency in half a dozen important States. Making no mention of any defect in the Southern social system, of slave labor, of overgrown landed estates, of the paucity of educational facilities, of neglected resources, he ascribed all Southern poverty and backwardness to the baneful operation of the protective tariff system. He drew contrasting pictures as vivid as those in which Mr. Clay had painted Northern prosperity, and the

force of the great orator's great effort was manifestly counteracted.

There was, indeed, a vast contrast between the languishing condition of the South and the feverishly rushing activities of the swiftly expanding North. The tariff was only in part responsible for the results in either section, but the Southern people believed that it was the root of all their evils, and they grew more sore and troubled daily. Their bitter sense of oppression increased, until, in that same Autumn, 1832, a convention called by the State Legislature of South Carolina met at Columbia, and adopted what is known in American history as the Nullification Ordinance. By this it was in substance declared as the voice of the State :

I. That the tariff law of 1828 and the amendment to the same of 1832 are " null, void, and no law, nor binding upon this State, its officers, or citizens."

II. That no duties provided for by that law or its amendment shall be paid or be permitted to be paid in the State of South Carolina after February 1st, 1833.

III. That in no case involving the validity of an act of the State Legislature, nullifying the tariff law, shall an appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States be permitted. No copy of proceedings shall be taken for such an appeal. Any attempt to make such an appeal " may be dealt with as for a contempt of the court," from which the appeal is taken.

IV. That every civil and military office-holder in the State, and every person hereafter assuming

office, and every juror, shall take an oath to obey this ordinance, and all acts of the Legislature in pursuance thereof.

V. In case the Government of the United States shall attempt to enforce the existing tariff laws by its army and navy, by closing ports or preventing the free coming and going of vessels, or in any way obstructing or harassing the foreign commerce of the State, then South Carolina will consider herself no longer a State of the Union: "The people of this State will thenceforth hold themselves absolved from all further obligation to maintain or preserve their political connection with the people of the other States, and will forthwith proceed to organize a separate government, and do all other acts and things which sovereign and independent States may of right do."

The extreme State rights men, in all the States, North as well as South, believed that the people of South Carolina held the abstract right to take that action in that manner. John Tyler did not believe that they were acting wisely or with sufficient cause, but his criticism of the Nullification Ordinance went no further.

President Jackson had already defined his own position sufficiently, for he had roundly threatened to hang any Nullifier who might be caught in armed resistance to national forces.

Excitement ran high in South Carolina. Warlike preparations were made. Medals were struck, with the inscription: "John C. Calhoun, First President of the Southern Confederacy." The aspect of

affairs would have been bad, indeed, if the storm area had not been so narrow. Nullification did not spread. The hour had not come. Other Southern States agreed with John Tyler that the movement was excessive and premature. Even Mr. Calhoun thought so, and used his influence on behalf of moderation. The rest of the country arose with enthusiasm to approve of General Jackson's prompt and vigorous policy of repression. General Scott was ordered to Charleston. Troops were made ready. Ships of war prepared to put to sea. Proclamations were issued declaring the President's purpose. Senator Hayne was chosen Governor of South Carolina, and John C. Calhoun was elected United States Senator in his place, resigning the Vice-President's chair that he might have a voice in the debates that were to come. He did not look forward to secession or rebellion, for when he reached Washington he took the oath to support the Constitution of the United States. He did so in time to listen to the reading of the President's Message to Congress, January 16th, 1833, detailing the position of affairs, and asking additional power to deal with armed Nullification. He took the floor at once, and made an able speech in vindication of his constituents, yet declared his devotion to the Union if maintained in accordance with his views of the original compact.

A bill was soon reported giving the President the powers he asked for, and again Mr. Tyler distinguished himself by the ability with which he opposed the obnoxious measure. It was known popularly as the Force Bill, and there were many good

Unionists all over the land who regarded it as needless. February 1st, "Nullification day," came and went without any open breach of law by the people of South Carolina. The President had recommended, and Congress devised and adopted, important tariff measures, looking toward compromise, and promising relief from the oppressions complained of. These measures were so nearly a surrender of all that the Protectionists had previously contended for, that secession had really nothing left to fight about. They were passed by large majorities, and the anti-tariff and State rights men had reason to claim a substantial victory. Late in the session the Force Bill came to a vote, at an hour when some men who might have opposed it to the last were absent, while some others were so unwilling to be called Nullifiers that they declared it a piece of perfunctory legislation not worth fighting. In the House it received a heavy majority. In the Senate only one man voted against it, and that man was John Tyler. There can be no question but what he courageously so voted in accordance with fixed convictions and clearly settled views of the authority and duty of the Federal Government under the Constitution.

He had not misunderstood the will of the people of Virginia. They were opposed to Nullification, to disunion, to civil war, but they were with John Tyler against the tariff and against the Force Bill, and in that very month of February the Virginia Legislature elected him to a second term in the Senate of the United States.

CHAPTER III.

*Tyler Against Jackson—Acting with Whig Leaders—
The Expunging Resolutions—Resigning his Seat in
the Senate—Elected Vice-President—Death of Gen-
eral Harrison—Tyler's Position as President of the
United States.*

MR. TYLER'S second term in the Senate of the United States began in December, 1833. He spent a long summer and autumn vacation in Virginia, attending to his law cases and meeting his neighbors, everywhere receiving marked recognition of the new fame he had won, but discovering also that with reference to the United States Bank the people of the Old Dominion were somewhat disposed to side with General Jackson.

The discovery did not make any change in the views or conduct of John Tyler. He hated General Jackson. He hated Martin Van Buren somewhat more bitterly. He was ready to defend almost anything, except a public improvement or a protective tariff, which those two men might propose to assail. He also firmly believed that General Jackson, in his war against the bank, was going far beyond any functions which the States, assenting to the Union, had proposed to put into the hands of the National Executive. He therefore returned to Washington, and resumed his seat in the Senate as an opponent

of the Administration, yet claiming to be still a member of the Democratic Party.

President Jackson was every day doing something which made such a position more and more uncomfortable, and more difficult to maintain.

At the same time, the new Whig Party, under the leadership of Clay and Harrison and other able men, was rapidly gaining strength, and seemed likely, in time, to absorb the New England anti-Jackson element, headed by Daniel Webster, the anti-Masonic faction, which had some strength in several States, and several other odds and ends of political discontent.

The President's war upon the bank had gone on without intermission during the Congressional vacation. In September he had directed the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Duane, to begin a process of transfer of Government funds from the Bank of the United States to several banks existing under State laws, and, upon Mr. Duane's refusal to comply, had dismissed him from office. His successor, Roger B. Taney, removed the deposits, the bank began to curtail its discounts, the business of important commercial classes was thrown into confusion, and a general panic was said to be at hand.

By the removal of the deposits, by the dismissal of Mr. Duane, by the veto of a bill for distributing among the States the proceeds of sales of the public lands, and in other ways, the President was arraying against himself a majority of both Houses of Congress, including some men who had voted for his re-election. His first list of nominations for

Government directors of the Bank of the United States was twice rejected by the Senate. Any direct attack upon him waited until December 26th, 1833, and then Mr. Clay brought forward a series of resolutions censuring the President for action taken before and after Congress assembled. One of these resolutions condensed the meaning of all, and was as follows :

“ Resolved, That the President, in the late executive proceedings in relation to the public revenue, has assumed upon himself authority and power not conferred by the Constitution and laws, but in derogation of both.”

Mr. Clay advocated his resolutions eloquently, and was supported by Mr. Webster, but neither of them equalled the vituperative force with which John C. Calhoun assailed the course of the President. Mr. Tyler vigorously sustained the resolutions, but the Whig leader, the Massachusetts statesman, and the champion of Nullification had left him comparatively little to say.

Andrew Jackson had able defenders, and the debates consumed the time of the Senate during three months, but the resolutions of censure were finally adopted by a vote of twenty-six to twenty. Senator Thomas H. Benton at once gave notice of a resolution to expunge the record of the censure from the journal of the Senate, and the expunging question, both as to the propriety and legality of such an act, became a constantly-recurring feature of the stormy political contest which followed.

The remainder of 1834, the year 1835 and the year 1836, were full of political and financial disturbances and excitements, while the President fought steadily on, through what seemed a series of defeats, to his final triumph over the bank and its supporters. All the while Mr. Tyler was forming strong personal friendships with the Whig statesmen, whose associate and ally he had in this manner become, and found himself drawing away farther and farther from both the old and the new leaders of the Democratic Party. He made a very consistent record, however, to the end of his career in the Senate. An unexpected termination was provided for him just before the close of General Jackson's Administration. The President was sensitively anxious that Colonel Benton's expunging resolution should pass, that he might retire to private life without, as he considered it, a blot upon his fame as a statesman. There was an all but sentimental feeling in his favor throughout the country, and a sufficient number of Senators had yielded to it to secure a majority for expunging. Mr. Tyler had enemies in the Virginia Legislature, and they well knew that he was not one of the men who had yielded. They therefore procured the passage of a resolution instructing him to vote for the removal of the Jackson censure from the Senate journal. The plot appeared to meet with entire success. When John Tyler was ordered by his own State to reverse his repeatedly declared verdict upon what he deemed a breach of constitutional law, there was but one course open to him. He could not obey,

and he could not disobey, and he therefore resigned his seat in the Senate. That body contained one anti-Jackson, anti-Van Buren man the less, but Mr. Tyler had not yet formally declared a dissolution of the tie which had bound him to the Democratic Party. Neither had he avowed any purpose of acting, in any event, with the Whigs. But the most important transactions of the previous two years had not all taken place in Congress.

The extreme school of Abolitionists had increased their activities in various ways, until, in 1835, a fanatically-bitter persecution had been aroused against them. The South, with one voice, declared them incendiary public enemies. They were mobbed in a number of places at the North. The Postmaster-General prohibited mail facilities for their publications. They were few in number, and formed no party organization, but they exercised a subtle influence which expressed itself in the fact that candidates for public offices were beginning to be inquired of more carefully as to their views, and as to any legislative votes which they had cast with reference to the Missouri Compromise, or any other phase of the slavery question.

The bone of future political contention was preparing in yet another form, and that large majority in the Northern States which did not ask for Abolition but was opposed to the extension of slavery was jealously watching the tide of emigration which was setting toward Texas. There was hardly any attempt to disguise the fact that eventual annexation to the United States was a settled part of the

purpose of this movement, and John Tyler was one of its friends from the beginning.

To him, indeed, the year 1835 brought a political event which materially changed his relations to his party for a time, and then opened for him a new and unlooked-for career.

It had been the well-understood will and plan of General Jackson that he should be succeeded in office by his capable and faithful lieutenant, Martin Van Buren, and there were signs, here and there, that the Democratic Party itself did not fully share in the purposes of its chief. A National Convention was therefore called a full year in advance, and it met at Baltimore, May 20th, 1835, for the express purpose of giving Mr. Van Buren a unanimous nomination. It did so, with six hundred votes, and then, much less unanimously, named Richard M. Johnson for the Vice-Presidency.

There were especial reasons why Mr. Tyler disapproved of even Colonel Johnson, but these were of minor importance compared with his rooted antipathy to Martin Van Buren. That gentleman was an embodiment of the Jackson policy, with the addition of suspected anti-slavery views, and also of something like personal enmity to John Tyler more than suspected.

The Whig Party had gained a fair degree of strength, but some of the elements opposed to Mr. Van Buren were not Whig. The Nullifiers of South Carolina were not so by any means, and in 1836 they cast the electoral vote of that State for Willie P. Mangum. The anti-Jackson party of Massachusetts

was not yet Whig, and it cast the votes of that State for Daniel Webster⁵. The corresponding elements in Tennessee and Georgia gave the votes of those States to Hugh L. White. The regular Whig candidates were William Henry Harrison and Francis Granger, who received seventy-three votes from seven States. The reason why Richard M. Johnson failed of an election as Vice-President, while Mr. Van Buren by one hundred and seventy votes was chosen President, was that the electors of Maryland, Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee, all nominally Democratic, declared in favor of John Tyler.

Colonel Johnson received his election at the hands of the Democratic majority in the Senate, when that body assembled, while the Whig Party took notice from the election returns that there was an important element at the South which might, perhaps, be made to vote the Whig ticket, if the co-operation of Mr. Tyler could be obtained. What was not so carefully noted, however, was the important fact that the Tyler faction, opposed to Van Buren and Johnson, was in hardly any point of political principles or doctrine really Whig, and was as sure as water itself to find its proper level.

The great political idea presented by the Whig leaders, as they now proceeded to rally and organize their forces for the next campaign, was a union of all the factions for the purpose of breaking the power bequeathed by General Jackson to Mr. Van Buren. They were ready to compromise many matters in

order to attain that end, and they accomplished their purposes remarkably well.

Mr. Tyler had for a long time followed the leadership of Henry Clay in the great debates where they had been in enthusiastic accord. He willingly joined the proposed combination, and did vigorous work for the consolidation of all the possible Whig strength in the State of Virginia. He went to the State Legislature in 1838 elected as a Whig by his own district, which had never before been represented by anything but a sound Jeffersonian Democrat. His constituents had undergone no real change, nor had he. They were State rights Democrats, and so was Mr. Tyler the same as ever.

There was a vast amount of strictly party work done on both sides during the first three years of Mr. Van Buren's Administration. He still held firmly in his own hands, through an army of office-holding, working politicians, the obedient machinery of his own party organization. More than any other man he had made it what it was, and no other Democrat could take it from him, and by means of it he made sure of a second nomination, in spite of the lukewarmness of many of his most distinguished associates. On the other hand, the several factions which had opposed him vainly in 1836 seemed welded into one, calling itself the Whig Party.

John Tyler was a man capable of forming strong personal attachments, as well as of adhering obstinately to political ideas, and when, in 1839, he came to the Whig National Convention as a delegate from

Virginia, he appeared as the zealous advocate of the nomination of Henry Clay for President.

The friends of Mr. Webster were not prepared to yield to his great rival, and there were others who dreaded Mr. Clay's imperious will. The Kentucky statesman had made enemies as well as friends during his long leadership in the House, and afterward in the Senate. The anti-Masonic faction had already declared its preference for General Harrison, and he had a great personal influence in the Western States. He had already been the candidate of the party in 1836 in the face of sure defeat, and it was said that he had a fair title to a new trial. The voice of the convention was finally given unanimously for Harrison as its candidate for President, but there seemed to be especial difficulty in naming a Vice-President. Prominent men, to whom the nomination was first offered, declined it. When the name of John Tyler was mentioned he was asserted to be a personal representative of the defeated Henry Clay interest as well as of an unknown Southern vote, which could be obtained in no other way. With very little dissent, the nomination of Mr. Tyler was declared, and the convention adjourned. Up to that time no President had died in office, General Harrison was supposed to be in vigorous health, and most men remembered that John Adams had described the Vice-Presidency as "a respectable situation" and very little more.

The great "Log-Cabin Campaign" of 1840 followed, and, at the end of it, the Whig Party won a remarkable triumph, for its narrow majorities elected

Harrison and Tyler by two hundred and thirty-four electoral votes against sixty.

Mr. Tyler became Vice-President by the votes of the Whig Party, without at all becoming what either Clay or Harrison could have called a Whig—that is, if they had known that he had not abandoned one hair of the strict Constructionist, State rights opinions in which he had been educated, and which he had so often defined by his speeches and votes in Congress.

He went to Washington in March, 1841, to take the oath of office ; but, shortly after the inauguration, he departed to his home at Williamsburg, Virginia. He seemed, indeed, to have gained another of the extraordinary promotions which had marked his political career. He had been most respectably provided for for four years to come, and he did not appear to be needed in Washington. He knew very well that a mere Vice-President, hardly a Whig at all, could have little influence over an administration which began its work with General Harrison in the White House, Daniel Webster, Secretary of State, and Henry Clay holding a sort of dictatorship over the Whig majority in Congress. Perhaps the true position and tendencies of a part of that majority were better understood by Mr. Tyler than by Mr. Clay.

The Vice-President was to spend only a few short weeks at his quiet farm house home at Williamsburg. Early in the morning of April 5th, 1841, a swift messenger dismounted at his gate, and brought to him the following startling communication :

“WASHINGTON, April 4, 1841.

“*To John Tyler, Vice-President of the United States:*

“SIR : It becomes our painful duty to inform you that William Henry Harrison, late President of the United States, has departed this life.

“This distressing event took place this day, at the President’s mansion in this city, at thirty minutes before one in the morning.

“We lose no time in despatching the chief clerk in the State Department as a special messenger to bear you these melancholy tidings.

“We have the honor to be, with highest regard,

“Your obedient servants.”

The signatures were those of Daniel Webster and the other members of the Cabinet, with the exception of the Secretary of the Navy, absent in Georgia. The brief despatch contained tremendous information, and Mr. Tyler must have been deeply stirred by so sudden, so utterly unlooked-for a change in his position. One thing that the Cabinet did not tell him, however, was that they had already held a meeting, and had passed a formal vote of want of confidence in John Tyler as President. In the absence of any historical precedent, they had decided, by vote, to impress upon him their joint opinion that he had not become fully the President by the death of General Harrison. When he reached Washington on the 6th, they tried to do so, and advised him to take a new oath to administer the duties of the Executive as acting President. He believed his inaugural oath sufficient, but consented to take another, disregarding their further suggestions, and calling himself President, without qualifying the title or diminishing the assumption of

authority. His decision has since then been fully accepted as sound constitutional law, and his example has been followed in the cases of Fillmore, Johnson, and Arthur.

The Harrison Cabinet was not disturbed in office by the new Chief Magistrate of the nation, but no amount of dignified courtesy on their part could conceal from a politician of Mr. Tyler's acuteness and experience the real meaning of their proposed restriction of his title and authority. He knew that if Henry Clay, for instance, had been in his place, no such proposition would have been made by a Whig Cabinet.

They were by no means alone in the alarmed view which they took of the changed political situation. Prominent Whigs everywhere gave utterance to forebodings. For instance, Mr. Samuel L. Southard, of New York, who had himself declined the Whig nomination for Vice-President, afterward given to Mr. Tyler, declared upon hearing of General Harrison's death :

"We have lost the fruits of ten years of labor. What incomprehensible fatuity in the convention to nominate John Tyler for Vice-President ! I know him thoroughly. He is a well-meaning man of fair capacity and patriotic intentions, but full of the narrowest Virginia abstractions, and has no sympathy with the principles or purposes of the men who elected him to office. We shall see the Whig Party distracted and overthrown, and the Democrats return to power at the end of two years, as the inevitable consequence of Harrison's death."

Mr. Tyler, therefore, entered upon his official duties under exceedingly disadvantageous circum-

stances. His Cabinet was not of his own selection, and was composed of men, not one of whom would have selected him for President. The party which had placed him in power was well aware that he did not really belong to it, while the leading Democratic prints were loading him with derision and vituperation.

That he should soon find himself at variance with the group of statesmen around him was inevitable, but the first open quarrel came earlier than even Mr. Southard seems to have anticipated.

The new Democratic tariff, the compromise tariff secured by the Nullificationists in 1833, had not worked well for the Treasury, whatever it was supposed to have done for the good of South Carolina. One of the first public acts of President Harrison had, in consequence, been a summons to the newly-elected Congress to assemble on May 31st, and provide means for meeting Government expenses and the interest upon the public debt. It was certain that there would be a strong Whig majority in both House and Senate, and the Harrison Cabinet prepared its work accordingly, very much as if Mr. Tyler were only an acting President, intrusted jointly with themselves as political executors of the policy and measures left behind him by the dead President. Mr. Tyler, on the other hand, considered himself an heir of full age, who had received his inheritance, and was no longer in need of either executors or guardians.

CHAPTER IV.

*Separation of Mr. Tyler from the Whig Party—
Veto of Party Measures—Changes in the Cabinet
—Calhoun Secretary of State—Texan Annexation
—Polk Elected—Retirement of Mr. Tyler—The
Peace Convention—The End.*

MR. CLAY had prepared a National Bank Bill in accord with the views of Mr. Thomas Ewing, Secretary of the Treasury—that is, with the approval of the Harrison Cabinet, but, when Congress passed it, August 6th, 1841, and sent it to the President, it failed to meet with his approval. He vetoed it, and Congress framed and passed another, trying to conform to his expressed views. He vetoed that bill on September 10th, and the breach between him and the Whig Party was rendered almost irreparable by the imperious manner in which Henry Clay called his old friend to a personal account for what he roundly described as presumption and rebellion.

The manner in which the leaders of both parties, and the people generally, discovered, from step to step, that Mr. Tyler's ideas were carrying him forward upon a path of his own, belongs to the political history of the day. The Harrison Cabinet, finding themselves practically out of place, resigned their places, and Democrats were appointed instead.

Daniel Webster alone remained, avowedly in order that he might finish the pending treaty with Great Britain. As soon as he and Lord Ashburton had settled the Northeastern boundary question in May, 1843, he also resigned.

Mr. Webster's views with reference to several important questions had not been widely at variance with those of Mr. Tyler, and their personal relations were not at first disturbed. With reference to one line of policy which was soon to become of foremost consideration Mr. Tyler wrote to Mr. Webster in October, 1841 : " I gave you a hint as to the possibility of acquiring Texas by treaty, could the North be reconciled to it. Could anything throw so bright a lustre around us ? Slavery—I know that is the objection, and it would be well founded, if it did not already exist among us."

It had not at that date become impossible for even a Whig statesman to favor the idea of Texan annexation. Long debates in Congress were required, and full discussions by the press, before leaders or parties or voters were prepared to take definite positions relating to territorial extension.

A full Democratic Cabinet was obtained in July, 1843, by the appointment of Mr. Upshur in Mr. Webster's place. It was made more definitely State rights, strict Constructionist, and pro-slavery, a little later, for, in February, 1844, Mr. Upshur was killed by the bursting of a cannon, and John C. Calhoun became Secretary of State.

Mr. Tyler's veto of the Bank Bill seemed inconsistent with his previous course, and has never been

satisfactorily explained, but, before long, it took its place as a fit beginning of a persistent line of action, hostile to Whig ascendancy. It is as a whole, rather than in piecemeal, that the course he followed can be understood as that of an able man with a distinct purpose in view.

There was a great political fact which the party politicians of 1840 had failed to take into full account. The old issues, the tariff, the United States Bank, public improvements and the like, no longer occupied the foremost place in the public mind, or in real importance to the country. Two very new parties were about to face each other upon a dividing line, which had long been in course of preparation for them. Mr. Tyler had been born and bred upon the Southern side of that line. Calhoun and Tyler, and other men who advocated slavery as a permanent feature of the social system of the South, were convinced that it could not long be defended behind its existing geographical boundaries. Its political strength must be kept upon an equality with that of its adversary in the Northern States, and that could be accomplished only by an increase of its domains. They therefore advocated territorial extension, beginning with Texas, but speaking freely of the regions beyond it, and of the West Indian islands. Time had been when even John Quincy Adams had declared himself in favor of extending the United States boundaries until they were equivalent to those of the continent of North America. He was now in Congress, standing all alone as a representative anti-slavery man, and no

longer an annexationist. He had changed, and so, in an opposite direction, had others, and a clear majority of the people of the United States were at heart in favor of extension, regarding the slavery question as secondary. This majority, North and South, was largely made up of the old Jackson Democracy, but it also contained many men who had never voted for Jackson. There was, moreover, a strong Democratic element mildly opposed to the extension of slavery, but not at all opposed to the acquisition of new territory. On the other hand, anti-annexationist Whig politicians at the South were often compelled to take the ground that the acquisition of more land meant more free States, and an increased peril to Southern domestic institutions. These were more nearly correct than any of the other prophets or schemers.

Mr. Adams, and other eloquent men in Congress, whenever the Texas question came up in debate, had plainly pointed out during Jackson's Administration, and afterward during that of Van Buren, that annexation meant war with Mexico. As time went on that warning seemed to lose some of its reasonable force. Texan independence seemed to be pretty firmly established, while Mexico, however she might threaten, was rent and torn by internal disorders which promised to prevent any considerable effort for the recovery of her lost Texan territory. It was easy at the last to persuade Northern extensionists, who hated war, that any considerable war was impossible, not many of them seeing that the annexationists of the extreme Southern type

desired the war itself as a means for obtaining much more than Texas.

The annexation movement suffered somewhat in 1841 by the wretched failure of a plan for the addition of New Mexico to the area to be acquired. What was called the Santa Fé expedition marched from Texas only to be surrendered to the Mexican authorities.

In April, 1842, when the diplomatic appropriations were under consideration in Congress, a spirited debate arose upon a motion to strike out the provision for a Minister to Mexico. Such a Government official, it was declared, would be only an agent of John Tyler and his friends for the purpose of bringing on a Mexican war. The appropriation was made, and, at the same time, the issue between the two parties was more distinctly drawn. What was of much personal importance to Mr. Tyler, however, was the bitter vehemence with which his old Whig associates, whether in Congress or speaking through the press, accused him of having deserted them for ambitious purposes, and of having become not the leader but the purchased tool of the Texas annexationists. He was told that stronger men than he would reap the political rewards of the course that he was pursuing, and that upon his head would be the guilt of all the blood which might be shed.

His assailants were blindly unjust, for Mr. Tyler had never at any time been an anti-slavery man, nor had he ever concealed his approval of the annexation of Texas. Even when, in August, 1842, he

vetoed the Whig Tariff Bill, and brought upon himself unmeasured condemnation, the ground he took was very much the same which he had defined in his speeches in the Senate years before. He was ambitious ; he desired a re-election, and knew that he could not hope for it from the Whig Party, but it was not merely personal ambition which separated him from that political organization. The course it was bound to pursue with reference to territorial extension, to the rights of the South, and of slave owners in any territory which might be acquired, was one in which he could not possibly have gone with them. His apparent desertion of the Whig Party was not caused by an ambition which induced him to change his political principles, but by the rooted fact that he had undergone no change whatever when he went into the general combination against Van Buren, and that now his old doctrines and his new aspirations worked in very fair harmony.

Abuse was heaped upon him unstintedly. Even his kindness of heart had made enemies for him at the outset. Immediately upon assuming the Presidency he began to check the dismissals and removals, especially of clerks in the public departments at Washington. Many of these were his personal acquaintances, were men with families depending for support upon their salaries, debarred from other employments, perhaps, by having grown gray in office. There was no good reason for their removal, and he said to a member of the Cabinet : " I cannot bear to have their wives and children come

to me with accounts of their sufferings when I can help it."

There were many eager office-seekers, and the entire throng of the disappointed charged their failures upon what they called the treachery of John Tyler.

In his official intercourse with all men, high or low, he was all that could be asked ; approachable, courteous, always willing to do a kindly action, or to speak a kindly word. In his private morals there was no reproach, and there was much to admire in the quiet home life of the family at the White House. There was a shadow there, also, for his wife, Mrs. Letitia Christian Tyler, was surely fading away. She died in September, 1842, leaving behind her a family of sons and daughters, her oldest daughter-in-law, Mrs. Robert Tyler, taking her place as mistress of the Executive Mansion.

The President's personal appearance at this time is described as that of a middle-aged gentleman of excellent health, refined manners, and the quick, alert step of a man exceedingly busy. He was above the middle height, somewhat slender, clean-shaven, with light hair. His light blue eyes were penetrating, and had a humorous twinkle which aided the notable faculty he possessed for telling a good story, and for making keen conversational hits.

In spite of Mexican protests and Whig opposition, the annexation project moved steadily onward, until, in 1844, it was brought before the whole people for their decision.

The Democratic Party contained a minority in

favor of annexation and a war with Mexico. Its majority expected annexation without much of a war. Together, the two wings were now slightly a minority of the popular vote, but they carried the election because they were united upon one candidate. They came near to not being so, for a number of Mr. Tyler's friends got together and gave him an independent nomination for President. The movement produced no change in the plans of the Democratic Party, and was shortly abandoned, for the obvious reason that it would have insured the defeat of annexation. Mr. Tyler was an impossible candidate, as much so as John C. Calhoun, since neither of them could have carried one State north of the Ohio River. A more prudent choice named James K. Polk, of Tennessee, for President, with George M. Dallas, of Pennsylvania, for Vice-President. The Whig Party named Henry Clay, of Kentucky, and Theodore Frelinghuysen, of New Jersey, and entered upon a vigorous campaign. They rightly assumed, in all prints and speeches, that annexation meant war, and they said at the North that it was also a movement on behalf of slavery extension.

The moderate anti-slavery men were with them, but the extreme Abolitionists were not, and nominated James G. Birney for President, with Thomas Morris for Vice-President. Clay and Birney together had twenty-three thousand four hundred and seventy-one votes more than Polk, but the Abolition votes were so distributed as to lose important electoral tickets for the Whig candidate, and

Mr. Clay carried but eleven States, North and South, with one hundred and five electors, while Mr. Polk had fifteen States, with one hundred and seventy electors. Mr. Tyler could say that his policy had been sustained, even if his personal ambition had been thwarted, and when Congress came together in December, 1844, the nature and spirit of that policy were unfolded more fully than ever before.

Early in the Spring of 1844 a treaty with Texas for the annexation of an indefinite piece of land called by that name, had been laid before the Senate by Mr. Tyler, and had been ignominiously rejected, only fifteen Senators voting for it. There had been a great change since then, and a number of new men had entered the Senate. To the strongly annexationist body, resulting from the nomination of James G. Birney, the President submitted a remarkable despatch of Secretary of State John C. Calhoun, to W. R. King, United States Minister to France. In this paper the annexation of Texas was defended as a means of upholding slavery in Texas, primarily, and "ultimately in the United States, and throughout the whole of this continent." Such a policy, it was urged, deserved the favor of slave-holding France, as counterbalancing the probable effect of the Abolition policy of England—a power which was widely believed to have covetous designs of its own with reference to Texas.

The country was startled by the boldness of the propositions made by Mr. Calhoun through Mr.

Tyler, but there was no wavering in the ranks of the majority in Congress. A joint resolution providing for annexation was reported on December 17th, and was adopted on the 25th. The President at once despatched a messenger to Texas to announce the action of Congress, and to ask for prompt co-operation.

The subject continued before both Houses throughout an excited session, during which the anti-slavery sentiment of the country received such a stirring up as it had never before known. Another annexation treaty was concluded, in spite of continuous protests of the representative of the Mexican Government. It received the approval of Congress on March 1st, and was signed by President Tyler on the 2d. He had, as he believed and declared, crowned his political career by an act which secured the permanence of the political policy, the constitutional interpretations, and the social institution, slavery, which he regarded as essential to the welfare of the country. He was ready to retire to private life, and to pass the remainder of his days as a quiet Virginia gentleman.

There was to be nothing in Mr. Tyler's retirement which would greatly resemble the last days of other Virginia Presidents of the United States, for he left all political influence behind him when he removed his effects from the Executive Mansion. He had not lost social position, nor the warm good-will of a host of personal friends, but the very party he had restored to power, and had endowed with new life, failed to perceive that it owed him anything

more than common civility. At the same time, the party which had distrusted him while seeming to trust him, and whose policy he had been instrumental in defeating, never mentioned his name without bitterness. As nearly as might be, he was condemned to a term of political exile, but his retirement was not otherwise uncomfortable.

There had been boisterous Whig mobs and derisive serenades before the White House in Washington during the long excitement of his war with the Whig leaders, and upon occasions when he had vetoed their measures. There was only honorable peace and local popularity around his Virginia home. During his first year as President he had loyally followed the example of Thomas Jefferson, and had spent more than his salary. He came to Washington a comparatively poor man, but with a tendency to social extravagance to which, for a season, he yielded somewhat thoughtlessly. At the end of the first year he remembered what became of Monticello, and changed his manner of living. He retrenched, paid his debts, saved as much from his salary as the dignity of his position permitted, and, at the end of his term, was able to own a comfortable landed estate, some slaves, and other property, and could pass the remainder of his days in the enjoyment of the comforts, and of some of the elegances, of rural life in Virginia.

The ex-President by no means lost his interest in the course of political affairs, for he was in full intellectual vigor and activity. For a long time the affairs of the nation in war and peace, the drift of

parties, and the growth of States, seemed to offer a justification of the course which he had taken. The Mexican War, for which he was so largely responsible, added not only Texas, but New Mexico, Arizona, and California to the area of the United States, and he could point to them as in a manner the fruits of his own statesmanship. The rapid growth of the anti-slavery movement at the North seemed also to fulfill his predictions, and in his view to justify all that he had done with reference to the visible necessity of protecting the rights of the South, and for the future security of its domestic institutions. Then came a more alarming tide of events, in and out of Congress, apparently leading on toward something politically worse than a merely Whig ascendancy. The State rights wing of the Democratic Party, the Nullification extremists, whom he had defended in 1833, began openly to organize for the secession of the South from the Union, as the Republican Party grew in numbers and in power. The irrepressible conflict between freedom and slavery was announced by William H. Seward. The ultimate extinction of slavery was demanded by Mr. Lincoln, when he declared that the nation could not long continue half slave and half free.

Mr. Tyler sincerely desired and hoped that the Union might be preserved, but he saw clearly, as did other pro-slavery statesmen, that this was not possible unless additional barriers could be raised against the rising tide of Abolitionism. He had grown old in his retirement, and the new genera-

tion which had arisen knew him only as an historical personage. He belonged to an era away back before the war with Mexico, and had been hidden away somewhere, while a dozen new States had been added to the Union, and while its population had more than doubled.

The strong Union element which existed in Virginia, directed by some of the best and ablest men of the State, determined to make one last effort for peace, even while the Congress of the proposed Confederacy assembled and began its sessions at Montgomery, Alabama. The State Legislature adopted a resolution, January 19th, 1861, calling for a convention of delegates from all the States, to meet at the city of Washington on February 4th, and discuss measures for an adjustment of the pending issues between the North and South. Five Virginia delegates were named, with ex-President John Tyler at their head. The other States responded rapidly. Eleven were represented when the convention was called to order on February 4th, and ten more were quickly added. Many of them named their delegates mainly from the list of their Senators and representatives in Congress, and the Peace Conference, as it was popularly termed, was an exceedingly dignified body of the foremost men of the nation. Hon. John C. Wright, of Ohio, was made temporary chairman, but the position of permanent presiding officer was unanimously declared to belong to John Tyler.

As a matter of course, none of the seceding cotton States had sent delegates to the convention, but

their most extreme views and demands were sure of adequate representation.

It was a time of profound excitement. In other parts of the country there were noisy demonstrations for or against secession, but the capital was quiet. Men walked about as if they were under a sense of oppression, and the air seemed heavy. The throngs from the North, which were to witness the Lincoln inauguration, had not yet come, and even the office-holding part of the city population was hardly able to believe that they were coming, and were bringing a great change with them.

The convention met in a room of moderate size, known as Willard's Hall, and Mr. Tyler's brief but eloquent address upon taking the chair was listened to by an uncommonly distinguished audience, as well as by the delegates who had then arrived. He declared his devotion to the Union, but when he added a hope that the labors of the convention would result in promoting harmony, all men knew that the realization of such a hope could be attained only by a surrender by himself, and other men like him, of political views which were as a part of his and their very life. The idea which they, on the other hand, seemed to entertain, was that anti-slavery men, in order that disunion and civil war might be prevented, should be willing to concede very nearly all that the Congress in session at Montgomery, Alabama, could have asked for, except the independence of the Southern Confederacy.

The debates of the Peace Conference were conducted with distinguished ability, but through all of

them ran an undertone which often found distinct expression. The men who made and advocated propositions looking toward compromise and adjustment did so with a growing conviction that their work was useless. Concurrent debates in Congress, and the action of Southern State Legislatures and conventions, actual military operations at several points, the seizures of forts and arsenals and navy-yards, the mustering of armed forces, the warlike declarations of prominent men upon both sides, all seemed to cast derision upon the sombre deliberations in Willard's Hall.

The daily sessions continued, nevertheless, until a final adjournment on February 19th, 1861, and resulted in the preparation of a proposed amendment to the Constitution of the United States. This would have been Article XIII. of that instrument, and contained seven sections embodying provisions for the protection of slavery where it already existed, or wherever the people of any territory forming into a State, south of prescribed lines, might decide in favor of it. Provision was also made for the recapture of fugitive slaves, or for compensation for them from the National Treasury. Other important compromises were combined with these in the several articles, and Mr. Tyler was entrusted with the honorable duty of bringing the amendment before Congress, with a request for its presentation to the several States for action. He performed his task in a written communication, which was presented in the Senate on February 27th, 1861. Spirited debates followed in that body and in the

House, but no definite action was taken. Before Congress adjourned most of the Southern leaders had departed to join the Confederacy, and in March, 1861, John Tyler himself accepted an election as a member of the Confederate Congress.

The Peace Conference was a dignified and state-ly failure, except in so far as it served to show how utterly the day of compromises had gone by. The courtesy, fairness, and ability displayed by its venerable presiding officer received due recognition, although the Northern press had sharp words, occasionally, for what they called "a Union meeting presided over by Nullification and Secession."

Mr. Tyler's service in the Confederate Congress was but brief. He was an old man, unfitted for the intense excitements of revolution and civil war, and he rapidly wore away under the new demands upon his strength. He lived long enough to hear of the notable successes which marked the first campaign of the Confederacy, and seemed to promise its permanence, but, in January, 1862, it was evident that he was failing, and on the 18th of the month he passed away.

JAMES KNOX POLK.

ELEVENTH PRESIDENT.

By WILLIAM O. STODDARD.

CHAPTER I.

*The Pollock Family—Birth of James Knox Polk—
Moving to Tennessee—Life in the Backwoods—
Hungry for Books—Clerk in a Country Store—At
School at Last—Graduated from the University.*

GREAT benefits have been conferred upon the United States by the manner in which Ireland has been governed by the King and Parliament of Great Britain. Long before the colonies dreamed of ever fighting for independence, the course taken by British legislators with reference to Irish industries greatly stimulated emigration to America, by making it more and more difficult, from year to year, for the most capable and industrious Irishmen to prosper at home. The first to venture across the sea in search of new homes and freedom were for the greater part from the North of Ireland. They were 'of a mixed race, of Norse and Saxon and

Celtic ancestry, which has exhibited qualities not surpassed by any other. A considerable number of them settled, almost clannishly, in the Carolinas, landing at the port of Charleston, and from this branch came Andrew Jackson. Another shipload sailed up the Delaware and found homes in Pennsylvania, not far from Carlisle, but some of its families did not long remain there. Reports came up from the South of a milder climate and better prospects. There may have been reasons also for dissatisfaction with the state of things in Pennsylvania, then under a semi-Quakerish domination. Most of the North Ireland emigrants of that day were Presbyterians.

Among those who shortly determined to abandon their first settlement was a highly respectable family bearing the name of Pollock, or, as they then pronounced it, and as it afterward was written, Polk. They and their kindred of other names made new homes for themselves on what was then the western border of the North Carolina settlements, at a date not precisely fixed, but several years before the long dispute between England and her American colonies grew into an armed conflict.

Unlike the great majority of British colonists, the Scotch-Irish brought with them very little sentimental loyalty. They came into the wilderness smarting under a sense of wrongs already endured, and were peculiarly prepared for active resentment of any additional injustice. Their North Carolina representatives were among the earliest and most zealous of American rebels.

Patrick Henry himself was not more prompt in calling his Virginia neighbors to arms, on hearing from Lexington, than was Colonel Thomas Polk among the Mecklenburg County pioneers. According to tradition, and fairly authentic record, a convention which was held, with Colonel Polk as chairman, adopted what is called "the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence" months before the Virginia Legislature instructed the delegates of that State in the Continental Congress to favor a separation from the mother country.

Thomas Polk was afterward a member of Congress, and Colonel of the Fourth Regiment of North Carolina Militia. His brother Ezekiel, also an active member of the Mecklenburg Convention, became captain of a company of rangers, whose military service was performed in the woods and mountains, guarding the border from the incursions of the Indian allies of Great Britain.

Samuel Polk, a son of Ezekiel, grew to manhood through the stirring years of the Revolutionary struggle. His father, the Indian fighter, could not bequeath to him much property, and he became a plain farmer, well known as a man of good common sense, and possessing personal influence among his neighbors. He was not an illiterate man, and among his acquirements was a knowledge of land surveying. In the year 1794 he married Jane Knox, whose very name suggests the sources from which the Scotch-Irish immigrants derived their spirit of sturdy independence and their readiness to make a stand against the authority of any human king. Her father,

James Knox, had been a patriot captain in the War for Independence.

There was an important event in the Mecklenburg County farmhouse on November 2d, 1795. A son was born, and his father and mother named him James Knox Polk, without the faintest dream that he would ever become Governor of a State, or Chief Magistrate of a great nation. There was less than ordinary reason to expect great success in life for a child who was delicate from the first, and whose earlier years were troubled by a bodily affliction, from which he was at last relieved only by skilful surgery.

James was, nevertheless, a boy of a courageous disposition, and soon began to show signs of extraordinary intelligence. There were almost no schools within reach, and books were few, although his parents did the best they could for him ; but from the narrow resources at his command he managed to obtain the beginning of a good education. The most important part of that beginning lay in the fact that a great thirst for knowledge had been aroused within him, and with it an ambition to become something higher and better than a mere backwoodsman.

The Polk family had taken a prominent part in politics from the day of their arrival in North Carolina, but Samuel Polk was not an aspirant for any party leadership. He was an ardent admirer of Thomas Jefferson, in opposition to aristocratic Federalism, and the earliest political lessons received by his son can be traced in their effect upon every step of an entirely consistent political career.

The western part of North Carolina labored under many disadvantages, some of which have hardly been remedied by the railway system of the present day, and enterprising, hard-working farmers grew restless when, year after year, they found their moderate crops bringing them such small returns. Hardly was the War of the Revolution over before some of them turned their faces farther westward still, and began to penetrate the toilsome passes of the mountain ranges. All the land due west of the old colony, to the bank of the Mississippi, was claimed as belonging to the State of North Carolina, and Mecklenburg emigrants who preferred not to go north of the Virginia-Kentucky line, only moved from one county to another of their own commonwealth. The first companies of pioneers halted in what is now East Tennessee, mainly because the forests beyond were tenaciously claimed and defended by tribes of Indians whose power had not yet been broken.

A small settlement was made at Nashville, on the Cumberland River, as early as 1779, and it was still fighting for its life in 1788, when Andrew Jackson went to make his home there to practice law and fight Indians. Year after year the North Carolina farmers talked more and more hopefully among themselves about the reported attractions of the Cumberland and Tennessee River country, and, in 1806, Samuel Polk decided that the time had come for him to make a new start in life.

The Mecklenburg County home was disposed of, and the family, to which several children had now

been added, prepared for a long and toilsome journey. It was a tremendous undertaking, since James, the oldest boy, was but eleven years of age, and the little ones seemed hardly fitted for enduring the possible exposures incident to camping out in the woods week after week. The Polk children, however, knew nothing of the softer side of civilized life, and it is likely that they made the trip something like a prolonged picnic, full of excitements, novelties, and small adventures.

A number of widely-scattered farms had already been opened along Duck River, a principal tributary of the Tennessee, and it was among these that Samuel Polk had determined to make his own clearing and build his log-cabin home. In the next year, 1807, the Duck River settlements were included in the new County of Maury, afterward divided into several counties, but a whole generation afterward that United States Congressional District was still described by the political press as "the Duck River District."

The new country was found to be all that had been told of it, including a certain degree of insecurity as yet from the incursions of adventurous Indian war parties. The Kentucky pioneers on the north were said to be suffering severely from the daring exploits of two young Shawnees, named Tecumseh and Elskawatawa, and their immediate band of followers.

The Creeks and Cherokees and Choctaws to the southward were every now and then heard from suddenly and terribly, but they were not likely to penetrate as far as Duck River, on account of chas-

tisements latterly inflicted upon them by the Tennessee militia against the policy of the Government at Washington. So good a report did Samuel Polk send back to North Carolina, and so firm was the confidence reposed in his judgment and accuracy of statement that all his kith and kin began to sell their farms and follow him into Tennessee. They had lost little of their Scotch-Irish clannishness, and the Polk family interest became a social and political power in the Duck River country.

So young a boy as James, and not very strong, was hardly ready for the rough work of opening a new farm in the forest, but there was enough for even him to do. Long wagon trips had to be undertaken from time to time to obtain supplies. Even hunting was an important business, and required prolonged absences from the homestead. Samuel Polk was also much employed as a surveyor. On expeditions of all sorts, it is related that James accompanied his father, taking care of the horses, keeping camp while hunts or surveys went on, and serving as cook and steward. Weeks together were often spent in the woods instead of at any school, and the longed-for education, the knowledge to be had from books, the higher intellectual life, seemed to be far away indeed.

Year after year went by without any important feature other than such as belonged to pioneer farm life. James attained a fair degree of health, but it was the fixed opinion of his parents and friends that he would never be strong enough to manage a farm of his own. Much less was he fitted for the tre-

mendous task readily undertaken by other young fellows of hewing out a farm for himself in the primeval forest. He seemed heavily weighted for any race for success to be run in such a community as that of Duck River. The people of the new countries placed great importance upon personal prowess, for other reasons than such as pertained to chopping, ploughing, and reaping. No man could foretell at what hour or where he might be called upon to stand for his life against some foe or other—brute or human. All men knew that James K. Polk was not much of a hunter, and that he would never do for a soldier, and his fondness for books did not yet impress anybody with the idea that he possessed other and more important elements of leadership than mere bone and sinew could have given him.

The stream of immigration continued to pour steadily in, and a fair degree of rude prosperity had been won by the earlier settlers. Samuel Polk had prospered beyond anything he could have hoped for in North Carolina, but he had now a family of ten children to provide for, and it was manifest that James must make his own way in life. The boy begged for more schooling, but it was not so clear to his father that over much learning could be turned to profitable account in such times as they were having in Tennessee. Crops were good, but ready money was very scarce, and schooling cost money, while there was a serious uncertainty as to its ever returning any cash dividends. James had never shown any turn for trade, but he already knew more about arithmetic and that sort of thing than did

most boys of his age. His father therefore obtained for him a place in a country store, where he could learn the ways and methods of miscellaneous traffic, looking forward to a day when he might become a merchant on his own account. There was a plain road to wealth in that direction, but the more James K. Polk looked at it the stronger became his conviction that it was not the right path for him. He went behind the counter and made the trial for a season, in obedience to his father's decision. No doubt he picked up useful information, for a country store in Tennessee was a sort of curiosity shop of all things raised or needed, bought or sold, by the entire community. There were men and women who came and went who were well worth studying, and there was leisure time for such additional books as could now be obtained. There was the difficulty, for every book that was read increased the young man's hunger for more, and he very shortly went again to his father with his plea for an education.

Samuel Polk was by no means a narrow-minded man, and he was not unable to appreciate the mental capacity already exhibited by his oldest son. Other people had taken note of it, and were beginning to think that something worth while might be made of him. The whole matter was reconsidered, and it was determined that James should have his way, cost what it might. In the year 1813, when he was eighteen years of age, he was placed under the tuition of the Rev. Dr. Henderson for a while, and after that was sent to the academy which had been established at Murfreesborough. All his pre-

vious attempts to educate himself became of value now, and in less than two years he had prepared to enter the sophomore class at the University of North Carolina. Against apparently insurmountable difficulties he had won a brilliant victory, and his father might well have been proud of him. He was more so three years later, when his son was graduated from the university with the first honors of his class, and came back to the farmhouse to be looked upon by all the neighbors as one of the most promising young men in all the Duck River settlements, if not in the State of Tennessee. Samuel Polk lived until 1827, and each successive year brought him a sort of harvest from the money he had wisely sown in the education of his son.

CHAPTER II.

Studying Law—Felix Grundy—Young Tennessee and Andrew Jackson—Polk Admitted to the Bar—Elected to the Legislature—Marriage—The Jackson Campaign—A Member of Congress.

EXCEPT for occasional Indian raids and alarms in the more exposed parts of Tennessee, the period between 1806, when the Polk family moved in, and the year 1812 when James was vainly trying to turn himself into a merchant, was comparatively uneventful. Not many newspapers found their way into Maury County, and the people there knew little of what was going on in the States of the Atlantic seaboard, and almost nothing concerning the course of events in the world beyond the sea.

No Federalism worth speaking of had ever made its appearance west of the mountains, and the voters were all members of the Republican Party, dividing on election days according to their individual preferences among candidates, or with reference to questions of State and local importance. Political canvasses, therefore, lacked some of the features which marked them in other parts of the Union, and young men grew up without much knowledge of national affairs, unless, like young Polk, they were engaged in a patient and ceaseless search for better information. All the more was such a seeker sure

of becoming a man of mark, a popular leader, to whom the uninstructed masses would look up for counsel and direction.

The news that came from the East kept alive the idea that there was trouble brewing with England, and there was a rooted conviction in the minds of the people that she was in secret alliance with the Indian tribes of both the Northern and Southern borders.

In 1811 came tidings of Harrison's victory over the Prophet and his warriors at Tippecanoe, and all men were aware that Henry Clay, of Kentucky, was loudly demanding a war. From that time onward there was a new topic for discussion, for Andrew Jackson, Major-General of the Tennessee Militia, was busily organizing his division, and getting it ready for active service in case Mr. Clay's confident prophecies should prove correct.

James K. Polk, by reason of his age, if not for physical reasons, could not be counted as a member of Jackson's division, and there was no need of him whatever. War with Great Britain was declared on June 12th, 1812, and the General was ready for it with twenty-five hundred men. In the middle of the following Winter he went down the river with over two thousand, by land and water, only to turn back again on reaching Natchez, and lead his force home in a manner which earned him the title of Old Hickory and the devoted admiration of all the boys in Tennessee. During the remaining years of the war James K. Polk was busy with his preparations for college, but, just before he was ready to set out for

North Carolina, news came up the river that the riflemen of Tennessee and Kentucky, under their heroic commander, had defeated the best troops in the British army before New Orleans. It was a proud day for the entire State, and when the disbanded volunteers came home and told their stories, all the men who had not fought under Jackson were so much the more ready to vote with him to the end of their natural lives.

Young Polk's college life was necessarily somewhat quiet. He was not disposed to waste time or strength in dissipation, and he was not over-supplied with money. His extreme punctuality was a sort of standing joke among his classmates, and continued a marked trait of his character. He confined himself even too closely to his search after knowledge, and when, in 1818, his college course was ended, his health was so seriously impaired as to require a long vacation at home. That very Spring General Jackson had performed another remarkable feat. He had finished the Creek campaign in less than five months, had chased the beaten Indians across the Spanish line into Florida, had taken a Spanish fort, and had hanged two Indian chiefs and two Englishmen. Again, all the young men of Tennessee were more than ready to agree with the majority of the House of Representatives, and with Secretary of State Adams, that their hero had done exactly right. They would have said so if he had stormed all the Spanish forts in Florida and hanged all the Indian chiefs and all the Englishmen.

Young Polk rapidly recovered a fair degree of

health and was in no doubt whatever as to his proposed career. He had long since determined to be a lawyer, and that choice almost carried with it the further assurance that he was to be a politician.

In 1819 he entered as a student the law office of Felix Grundy, at Nashville, and here he was in the very political home of General Jackson. The General's plantation was but a few miles out of town, and he was himself a frequent visitor at Mr. Grundy's office. The latter held a deservedly high rank in his profession, and possessed a political influence which extended beyond the limits of his own State. In the Congress of the United States and in the councils of the leaders of his own party, he was regarded as one of the most capable men in the nation.

There was nothing repellent in the manners of General Jackson. For young men particularly he possessed a peculiar fascination. His frank and kindly courtesy won them to him wherever he went, predisposed in his favor as most of them were by all they had read or heard of his adventurous, romantic career. He won the very heart of Mr. Grundy's law student, and all the inherited prejudices, the political training, and the social tendencies of James K. Polk were in perfect accord with those of his chosen leader. Andrew Jackson's father and mother were Scotch-Irish immigrants who had settled in North Carolina. So, on both sides, were the parents of Samuel Polk and Jane Knox, and their son knew that Jackson had been riding with Sumter, while his own grandfather had been leading the Mecklenburg company of rangers. A time was coming when all

this was to be of even national importance, for a President was to need a leader of the House of Representatives upon whose personal and political fidelity he could utterly rely.

The United States was almost destitute of politics in the year 1818. It was "the era of good feeling." James Monroe was President, there were no parties, the country was prosperous, the Indians, except on the Georgia borders, were reasonably quiet, the treaty with Spain for the purchase of Florida was even more sure to come at once, after Jackson had shown how easily all that wild land could be had for nothing, and men went about their business as if all things had at last been settled and were not likely to be soon stirred up again.

It was a sort of calm before a storm. The great debates over the admission of Missouri as a State of the Union began in the Winter session of Congress, 1819-20, and the political contest of which they were the prophecy lasted through half a century.

It was generally admitted that James Monroe was entitled to a second term as President of the United States ; all the leading politicians were at sea as to the political future, and so there was no division of votes worth mentioning in the year 1820. One elector voted for John Quincy Adams and all the rest for Mr. Monroe.

In the course of that year James K. Polk was admitted to the bar, and the rapidity with which he had prepared himself suggests what may have been the nature of some of his overwork while at the university. He at once returned to Maury County

and opened a law office at the village of Columbia. He was pretty well assured that all the Polk family, and all their kindred and connections, and every neighbor over whom they had any influence, would do what they could to increase his list of clients.

While Polk had been studying law in the office of Felix Grundy, Andrew Jackson had been building the new brick house which became famous as the Hermitage. At the same time his friend, Major Lewis, Quartermaster of the Tennessee Militia, had been skilfully planning a nomination of the General for President of the United States. He had his agents and correspondents all over the State, and one of them was a young lawyer in Columbia, Maury County. The work prospered prodigiously, and on July 20th, 1822, it had progressed so far that the Legislature of Tennessee adopted a regular preamble and resolutions, setting forth the merits and services of General Jackson, and recommending him to all the rest of the nation as the right man to go into the White House when Mr. Monroe should go out. After that the Jackson movement spread fast in other States, and there was just enough of opposition in his own to make it worth while for his adherents to hold public meetings and make eloquent speeches.

The political career of James K. Polk fairly began with the plans of enthusiastic Major Lewis. Already a good country law practice had made the young man independent of further assistance from his family, and now he made them more proud of him than ever by the remarkable faculty he was exhibiting as

a stump speaker. He seemed to know precisely what to do with a crowd of Tennesseans. Even a dull man could have made them all hurrah for Jackson, but the young lawyer went a step beyond that, and made them also hurrah for Polk. The Duck River people were entirely satisfied with the course of their brilliant young neighbor, and, in 1823, they elected him a member of the State Legislature. They sent him again, in 1824, very much as a matter of course, for they heard of him continually as doing them great credit by the ability he was displaying, and by his vigilant care of all their interests, especially of their interest in the election of General Jackson.

During those years the Legislature had much business before it of a strictly legislative character, for the State was growing fast, but the entire body considered that its most important work was the regulation of the affairs of the nation, particularly with reference to the Presidency.

At the opening of the year 1824, James K. Polk took yet another important forward step in life. On New Year's Day he was married to Miss Sarah Childress, eldest daughter of Joel Childress, a wealthy merchant of Rutherford, Tennessee, a very estimable young lady of many accomplishments. She was eminently well fitted for the brilliant social career opened to her by that New Year's Day wedding.

There was a very remarkable Presidential campaign that year, for it was personal and sectional rather than a strife between organized parties. Nobody could guess until the votes were actually

counted what, or nearly what, the decision of the people might be. Those who knew most, and said so, were the most widely mistaken, for the people failed to decide. They had so divided their electors among four candidates that neither was elected. Andrew Jackson had ninety-nine votes; John Quincy Adams, eighty-four; William Harris Crawford, forty-one, and Henry Clay, thirty-seven. Henry Clay had also a controlling influence and position in the House of Representatives, and was able, when the decision of the matter came before that body, to make a President of John Quincy Adams and a lifelong enemy of Andrew Jackson. From that time forward, the sister States of Kentucky and Tennessee were long in the habit of voting upon opposite sides of political questions.

The Tennessee Legislature bitterly resented the failure of their nomination. They had elected their hero to the United States Senate in 1823, and now, when he came home and resigned and retired to the Hermitage, they gave him at once a second Presidential nomination, while Major Lewis in the West, and Martin Van Buren in the North, and some very able men in the Southeastern States undertook to organize a victory for him.

In all the debates of the legislative sessions of 1824 James K. Polk had distinguished himself, and was regarded all over the State as the most promising of the younger members of the Assembly. The Sixth Congressional District, however, the Duck River District, decided that he had been there long enough, and, in August, 1825, they elected him to

the Congress of the United States. He took his seat in December of that year at the age of thirty.

Thus far the determined industry of the boy who had started in life with so poor a prospect had been rewarded wonderfully. His education, his rigidly correct habits of life, his unblemished reputation, his excellent standing as a lawyer, his home, his powerful political friends, his place in the councils of the nation, all were in one sense a harvest of his own planting and reaping. It is nevertheless true that he had enjoyed peculiar advantages. After once making a good beginning, he had had less competition than that which would surely have opposed and hindered him in an older and more generally educated community. Moreover, while no lands or other property had descended to him from his ancestry, it was of very great importance to his career that he inherited a good colonial and Revolutionary family name, and with it a strong hold upon the Duck River constituency and the personal friendship of Andrew Jackson.

CHAPTER III.

The Texas Annexation Question—Election of President Jackson—The Bank War—Mr. Polk and Judge White—Defence of the President's Veto of the Turnpike Bill.

TAKING his seat in December, 1825, Mr. Polk may be said to have begun his career in Congress with the year 1826. As the Duck River District was to re-elect him continuously until 1839, he had come to stay. He had been elected as an active agent in the great Jacksonian Democratic political campaign, and it was part of the policy adopted by the General and his lieutenants that neither he nor they should take dangerously decided ground upon any exciting question while the canvass was going on. A new campaign had begun and prudence continued. General Jackson had, indeed, argued before the Tennessee Legislature in favor of an amendment to the Constitution, providing for elections of Presidents directly by the people. He was known to be an enemy of wildcat banks and paper money, and so was Martin Van Buren, his lieutenant in New York, but the United States Bank question was not yet before the country. It was at first more than a little uncertain what would be Jackson's course with reference to internal improvements and the tariff, and there, at least, James K. Polk was ahead of his

leader. The new representative from Tennessee was a free trade advocate, and a moderate strict Constructionist, opposed to internal improvements from the beginning.

The seeming requirements of the Treasury strengthened the hands of the high-tariff men, and Henry Clay, now Secretary of State, retained for a time his old influence in Congress. He was able to do much for a protectionist policy even when, a year later, both Houses of Congress contained majorities opposed to the administration of President Adams. In his first message to the Congress which had decided the electoral question in his favor, the President had recommended :

“ The maturing into a permanent and regular system the application of all the surplus revenues of the Union to internal improvement.”

John Quincy Adams claimed to be a representative statesman of the Republican Party, but Mr. Polk, and other Jacksonians, declared that in this and in other features of his declared policy they discovered the teachings of his Federalist father, John Adams.

The subject of slavery was not before the Congress of 1826-27 in any dangerous form, and Mr. Polk had not then an opportunity for making a distinct record. He had no need for so doing, since the planters along Duck River, including his own kindred, were all slaveholders, and he had himself become one as soon as his means permitted.

The political canvass of 1824 had already brought

to the surface a matter which was to be of greater importance than any other in the political career and public services of James K. Polk. It was the Texas annexation question, so generally believed to have been born in a later day.

When, in 1803, Thomas Jefferson purchased the Louisiana territory of Napoleon, First Consul of France, the region transferred was not defined by an accurate map, nor were its Spanish-Florida boundary lines upon the east, nor its Spanish-Mexican line at the Southwest indicated in writing with clearness.

The Florida part of the disputes, which arose in consequence, was not terminated until the purchase of Florida from Spain in 1819, nominally by President Monroe, but really through the persistent efforts of John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State. There were many Americans, among them Mr. Polk, who strongly held the opinion that the district known as Texas had been a part of the Louisiana territory. The boundary between the original French and Spanish possessions had never been surveyed or settled, each power keeping somewhat in the background a first-discovery claim to the same indefinite tract of wild land, of no great present value, lying along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico and extending, nobody could say how far, into the cloudy interior of the continent of North America. The French title to this indefinite land had found eager defenders even in President Jefferson's time, and their opinions grew stronger, and they obtained more hearers, as the importance of Louisiana and the Gulf

country became better and more widely understood. There had been sharp criticisms of the treaty of 1819 acquiring Florida, because it mentioned the Sabine River and not the Rio Grande as the boundary of Spanish-Mexican possessions, but Congress had agreed to the treaty, and President Monroe had been praised highly for securing it.

In 1824, however, the Jacksonian assailants of Mr. Adams as a candidate for election as President came forward with a vehemently-urged accusation that, in 1819, as Secretary of State, he had needlessly and negligently sacrificed the just right and title of the United States to a vast province. It was true that Spain had even then but a feeble and failing hold upon Mexico, which she had since lost altogether, and was in poor condition to have given a good title to the country south of the Sabine, but Mr. Adams was charged with having thrown away the old French ownership when he had it in his power to extend and confirm it in the hands of his own country. For, whatever it was worth, it was now Mexican property, and there seemed to be small prospect of its ever becoming anything else.

That charge against President Adams, and that partisan reassertion of the French claim to Texas, distinctly committed the coming administrations of Jackson and Van Buren to a policy of annexation.

The whole nation was in a state of political effervescence during 1827, and seemed to give itself up entirely during the year 1828 to the fierce excitements of the Presidential canvass. Never before had partisan feeling run so high, and the floodgates

of personal abuse and calumny were opened wide. Both candidates were accused of all the political errors and crimes which could be invented, and General Jackson was painted as a bloodthirsty murderer. That he had been a severe military disciplinarian there was no doubt, and he had fought at least one fatal duel of a peculiarly savage nature, but he was really a man of humane and kindly disposition. James K. Polk was opposed to duelling upon principle and never took part in such an affair, but quite a number of prominent men opposed to Jackson had fought duels, and more were avowed apologists for the strange barbarism miscalled the code of honor. There was nothing in his fighting record to harm him in Tennessee, however, and the entire State polled but three thousand votes against him.

There were two hundred and sixty-one votes in the United States electoral colleges that year, and Andrew Jackson received one hundred and seventy-eight of them, against only eighty-three for John Quincy Adams. The triumph of the new party had been largely in excess of its most sanguine expectations, and it assumed control of national affairs with a seemingly strong and compact majority in both Houses of Congress. The course taken by the President, nevertheless, speedily developed the fact that neither in the Senate nor in the House of Representatives was he absolute master of the situation. The former body exercised its Constitutional right to criticise his nominations, and actually rejected some of them, while the latter proved entirely unmanageable the moment he touched upon the

United States Bank question and began to veto bills for internal improvements.

If there were any points in the earlier course of the Jackson Administration which Mr. Polk privately criticised, he made no public utterance of his criticisms. He was recognized as one of the President's political body guard, ready at all times and places to give him a peculiarly efficient support.

The President's hostility to the Bank of the United States began to manifest itself in the Summer of 1829, but he could do nothing of importance before the assembling of Congress in December. In another direction he set on foot a movement which became of vast importance to the future of the United States as a whole and to James K. Polk in particular.

Mr. Poinsett, of South Carolina, had been sent to Mexico as Minister of the United States by President Adams, but he was at heart a Jackson man, a friend of the new Vice-President, John C. Calhoun, and was not at once recalled by the new Administration. He afterward remained for yet another reason. Mr. Adams had been, at one time, ardently in favor of extending the domain of the nation until it should include, as nearly as might be, the entire continent. He only ceased to be so afterward, when territorial extension became another name for the extension of slavery. In 1827, or earlier, through Mr. Clay, Secretary of State, a vague authority had been given Mr. Poinsett to negotiate for the purchase of Texas. A million of dollars was supposed to be enough, in the utterly impoverished condition

of the Treasury of the then very new Republic. He had as yet accomplished nothing, when, in 1829, he was encouraged by the new Secretary of State, Mr. Van Buren, to push his work with greater energy, the disposable sum of money being increased to four, or even to five, millions of dollars. It was necessary that he should proceed with prudent secrecy, but he failed to do so, and entangled himself in such a manner with warring factions that at last the Mexican Congress passed a vote ordering him to leave the country. Meantime, however, the newspaper press of the United States printed sensational accounts of his authority and probable success, and a fever of excitement was aroused in the South and West. The district known to Mexican politicians as Texas began at the Sabine River, extended along the coast uncertainly, but not farther than the Nueces River, and only a few hundred miles into the interior. Mr. Poinsett's negotiations did not name the Rio Grande as a boundary, but the ideas entertained by Americans of the old French title, and of any new title to be bought or taken, did so from the beginning. Their view of the interior dimensions carried them back to the border of New Mexico, wherever that shadowy line might be.

The Southwestern States contained a number of daring adventurers, many of them owners of slaves and other property, to whom the idea of going in to take possession of an entirely new country had an irresistible attraction. There was something patriotic about it, so far as the whole United States was concerned, and there was more that was South-

ern and sectional, for it was plainly understood that Texas was to become a slave State, a counterpoise to the swiftly-growing power of the non-slaveholding North. A stream of emigration poured over the border, and shiploads of adventurers landed at the Texas ports of the Gulf.

Texas was a State of the Mexican Republic, and there were no laws to hinder the incoming of American settlers, but there were very positive laws forbidding the importation or holding of slaves. Perhaps it was of equal importance that the Mexican Government at that time lacked the military power to enforce its nominal authority over a very large part of its territory.

The long war of Andrew Jackson against the Bank of the United States began in due form, but with seeming moderation of expression in his first message to Congress in December, 1829. He called attention to the fact that the bank charter would expire in 1836, questioned both the constitutionality and the expediency of such an institution, and declared that it had failed to provide the country with a sound currency. Congress listened without feeling called upon to take any immediate action, and the friends of the bank began to rally their forces for the purpose of obtaining the charter which the President had determined to refuse them. From the beginning to the end of the struggle which followed, James K. Polk was entirely in accord with his leader, but he was first heard from upon another subject.

The tariff question had been temporarily settled

by the previous Congress in such a manner as to produce deep dissatisfaction among the people of the South. Threatening murmurs came northward at times, especially from Georgia and South Carolina, and there were leading politicians who began to talk with startling emphasis about the reserved rights of the States, including the right to leave the Union altogether. There was a general feeling of uneasiness rather than alarm, until, at the annual public dinner in honor of Thomas Jefferson's birthday, April 13th, 1830, the tone of the regularly-appointed toasts led President Jackson to respond with, "The Federal Union : It must be preserved."

A coldness had already begun between the President and Mr. Calhoun, the Vice-President, and it grew colder when the latter now followed with a toast which plainly asserted that there might be circumstances under which the Union could not be preserved. Neither then nor afterward was there any reason to question Mr. Polk's devotion to the Union, and through all the phases of the subsequent Nullification excitement, he was as steady against that heresy as was Jackson himself.

A time was at hand for the young member from Tennessee to step out from the comparative obscurity in which he had thus far been hidden. He had been by no means a silent looker-on, and had done good work in connection with the important committees to which he had been assigned, but there were many able men in that Congress, and it was not easy for a new comer to obtain prominence among them.

The majority of the Senate as well as of the House was in favor of internal improvements, but the celebrated Maysville and Lexington Turnpike Bill originated in the latter, and therefore came back to it with a veto message from the President. Mr. Polk had vigorously opposed the bill in all its stages, and now, when the question came before the House, "Shall the bill pass, the President's objections notwithstanding?" he displayed, in defending the veto message, an eloquence and force which at once entitled him to rank among the foremost of the very capable debaters around him. Full reports of that debate went to Tennessee, and the Duck River planters were more than ever proud of their representative. He had "stood by the old man, and there was enough stood with him to defeat the opposition." Many of them were enabled to discover at once what were their own views upon the great subject of internal improvements. They agreed entirely with "the old man and Jim Polk."

In 1831 the first Cabinet of President Jackson was broken up by the absurdities of what is known as "the Eaton affair." One of the changes made had a singular effect, years afterward, upon Tennessee politics, and upon the unity of the Jacksonian Democracy. Major Eaton, Secretary of War, had been a Senator from Tennessee, and his place had been filled by the election of Hugh L. White, one of the best and most popular men in all the Southwest. General Jackson now, through several mutual friends, particularly through James K. Polk, urged Judge White to accept the position of Secretary

of War vacated by the resignation of Major Eaton. It was an honorable office, but the offer was well understood to imply Eaton's return to the Senate by White's help. It was, in fact, a sort of trade, and the proposition was not only declined but was keenly resented. Up to that day the President had had no better friend than Judge White, but their political paths began to separate thenceforward. A knot of capable men, all strong supporters of Jackson, all Republicans in name, grew colder and colder in their party allegiance, until at last, in 1840, they organized the Whig Party of Tennessee and swept the State for Harrison.

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Polk a Leader—Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means—Speaker of the House of Representatives—The Removal of the Deposits from the Bank of the United States.

IN the beginning of the year 1832, during which Andrew Jackson was to come before the people as a candidate for re-election, there were three fairly defined factions in the Congress of the United States. Each faction, however, contained a number of men who were ready to act with either of the others upon some of the great questions of the day. The extreme State rights faction, headed by John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina, and John Tyler, of Virginia, was divided upon the Bank question, and even upon Nullification itself, but was ready to fight any kind of high tariff, or to assail the President personally. For instance, it was by Mr. Calhoun's casting vote in the Senate, as Vice-President, that Martin Van Buren's nomination as Minister to England was defeated.

The high-tariff party, mainly in favor of the United States Bank and of internal improvements, absolutely hating the President and all his ways, contained many extreme advocates of territorial extension. It was the nucleus of the Whig Party and was led by Henry Clay.

The Jackson Democratic Party, the President's own, could at times rally a majority of both Houses, and could at all times muster strength enough to prevent any bill from passing over the President's veto by a two-thirds vote. Of this firm and trustworthy phalanx James K. Polk was now rapidly becoming the acknowledged leader. It contained no more skilful parliamentarian or master of the tactics required in managing a bill before the House. It was rich in men of long political experience, but could not boast of a more ready, eloquent, and forcible champion in debate than the young member from Tennessee.

The charter of the Bank of the United States was not to expire until 1836, but a bill for a new charter was brought before Congress in 1832, in order, it was stated, that the great financial interests involved might not suffer from undue uncertainty. It was a Senate bill, and was passed by that body on June 11th by a vote of twenty-eight to twenty, the majority including the State rights men. When the matter came before the House of Representatives Mr. Polk distinguished himself by his opposition, but the combined factions arrayed against him were too powerful. The bill passed the House on July 3d, by a vote of one hundred and nine to ninety-six, the majority here also including all the State rights men, and it was loudly declared by short-sighted people that General Jackson's power had been broken. It had not been hurt. He took a week to prepare his message, aided by the group of able counselors who had received the name of his Kitch-

en Cabinet, and on July 10th he sent the Bank Act back to the Senate with a veto message, which placed him before the country as the champion of hard money and the people's rights, as against paper money and oppressive monopolies, such as the over-swollen Bank of the United States. He was the people's President, defending the poor against the rich. There could be very little reasonable doubt of the effect of such an appeal, but even good political judges were so excited that they failed to understand it. The friends of the Bank could not pass their bill over the veto, but they went into that Presidential canvass with strong hope of utterly defeating the unscrupulous tyrant, as they called him, who was trying to make his own will the law of the land.

Mr. Polk distinguished himself again in defending the veto ; he had no fear whatever concerning his own re-election, and went out into the general political field in a manner which extended his already wide reputation as a stump speaker.

There was almost as deep an interest and as fierce an excitement as in 1828, and the result was once more an astonishment. Andrew Jackson swept the country, receiving two hundred and nineteen electoral votes against forty-nine given for Henry Clay, eleven for John Floyd, and seven for William Wirt. Martin Van Buren was elected Vice-President, although his vote only reached one hundred and eighty-nine, and once more both Houses of Congress seemed to have strong administration majorities.

In the House of Representatives there are two positions of vital importance for the management

and control of current legislation. First in rank is that of the Speaker, upon whom devolves the appointment of all standing committees, the decision of tie votes and of points of order, and whose power is often hardly less than that of the President himself. Second, and generally in strict political alliance with the Speaker, although independent of him after being appointed, is the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, the leader of the House. This was the post of honor assigned to James K. Polk in the Congress of 1833, and it placed him before the nation as the President's chosen champion in the House of Representatives. There is no similar official position in the Senate, but the Jackson majority there regarded Senator Thomas H. Benton, of Missouri, as the President's responsible agent.

While the Presidential election had been carried to its conclusion, the people of South Carolina had cut out some very important work for General Jackson. Their State Legislature, on October 25th, called a State Convention to meet on November 19th. When the convention met it adopted the Nullification Ordinance, threatening secession, rebellion, and civil war. When Congress assembled on the first Monday of December, 1832, they received an elaborate message upon national affairs, the reduction of the tariff, which the Nullifiers complained of, the public lands, the Bank, and other matters, and they also received another message, penned later than the first, and full of fiery Unionism. The President had also made preparations for suppressing Nullifi-

cation forcibly, and issued a proclamation to that effect on December 10th. Governor Hayne, of South Carolina, replied by a proclamation which was vigorous in words, but had no army to make it strong otherwise, while the President asked Congress for additional authority and resources. These were provided for him in what was known as the Force Bill, which passed the Senate on February 20th, with only John Tyler voting against it, and which Mr. Polk easily carried through the House on the 27th. Long before that, however, the tariff reduction recommendations, in President Jackson's first message, had been taken up, and had been so acted upon that the anti-tariff South had very little left to fight for. Mr. Polk was himself opposed to a protective tariff, and the State rights men were all with him. Mr. Clay and his followers obtained something in the nature of a compromise, but it was not even a revenue tariff, for under it the Treasury surplus melted away, and in a few years the Government was not receiving money enough to pay its running expenses.

Mr. Polk acquitted himself well as Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, all the while strengthening his hold upon the unflinching main body of his party and maintaining very good relations with its extreme Southern wing. With that faction he had one strong point of sympathy leading to future co-operation, for they were all annexationists and so was he. During all this time American emigrants had continued to move into Texas, with or without slaves, for the hardly-concealed pur-

pose of wresting it from Mexican control. Among them were men of ability, combined with great personal courage and prowess, and the imaginations of all American boys pictured them as heroes of romance. It is quite likely that no other set of heroes ever passed through a more romantic series of adventures. The Mexicans dreaded them, and hated them ferociously, and, while unwilling to face them except in overwhelming force, massacred them pitilessly whenever afterward, in the course of the war which resulted in Texan independence, the American adventurers were worsted.

During the Summer of 1833 General Jackson made a sort of triumphal tour through some of the Northern States, and returned prepared for a blow at the United States Bank. He was aware that another effort was to be made to secure a charter, and he determined to cripple his enemy beforehand. The Bank held about nine millions of dollars of Government funds, and upon this deposit its commercial loans were largely based, for it was a Treasury surplus, to be drawn upon it, was expected, only as the well-understood needs of the nation might require. On September 18th the President read to his Cabinet his reasons for deciding that no more Government funds should be deposited with the Bank of the United States, and why the money already there should be steadily withdrawn. He took the responsibility of directing that deposits should thenceforth be made in other institutions, to be selected for the purpose, but Mr. Duane, Secretary of the Treasury, declared such an act contrary to law, and

refused to issue the necessary order. He was removed, and Roger B. Taney, who was appointed in his place, proceeded to carry out the President's arbitrary policy.

When Congress came together in December, 1833, the first business before it was a discussion of the removal of the deposits, for the Bank had at once curtailed its discounts ; there was commercial distress in consequence, a panic threatened, and many who had voted for Jackson's re-election were loud in their denunciations of what to them seemed an uncalled-for act of severity.

There was a majority in the Senate ready to condemn the removal of the deposits, but it was not at first clear what course the several factions of it could be induced to agree upon. On December 26th, 1833, Mr. Clay introduced a series of resolutions censuring the President, and declaring that he had "assumed upon himself authority and power not conferred by the Constitution and laws, but in derogation of both."

Mr. Clay was supported by Mr. Calhoun, Mr. Tyler, and other strict Constructionists, but it was more than three months before he obtained the passage of his resolutions.

Meantime there had been a very different condition of affairs in the House of Representatives, for there was a larger number of new men there who had been elected as a part of General Jackson's latest political victory. Mr. Polk was able to keep an Administration majority in good working order throughout the session. There were stormy de-

bates, and the President's conduct was assailed as bitterly as in the Senate. There, however, there was no man, admitting the ability of Colonel Benton, who was at all able to cope with such a trio as Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and John C. Calhoun, while in the House the enemies of the President had no leader who could be called the superior of James K. Polk.

The latter, as Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, after a while reported a series of resolutions fully sustaining the course of the President. He advocated them with remarkable skill, and obtained a vote upon them April 4th, 1834. The first was, in substance: "*Resolved*, That the Bank of the United States ought not to be re-chartered;" and it received a majority of fifty-two. The second resolution said that the deposits ought not to be restored to the bank, and the anti-panic vote cut down Mr. Polk's majority to fifteen. The third approved of continuing national deposits in State banking institutions, and received a majority of only twelve. The fourth resolution ordering an investigation of the affairs of the Bank, obtained a majority of one hundred and thirty-three, and President Jackson's victory in the House of Representatives was complete. It had been won for him by Felix Grundy's law student, with whom he used formerly to chat sometimes when he rode into Nashville from the Hermitage.

That was a great session of Congress for James K. Polk, but he had made himself almost too much the leader of his party, and he had excited jeal-

ousies by his too rapid advancement. Moreover, he had vehemently declared himself against a United States Bank of any possible pattern and in favor of a tariff for revenue only. In the course of the session, June 18th, 1834, the Speaker of the House, Andrew Stevenson, of Virginia, resigned, and Mr. Polk was the regular Democratic candidate for the post of honor so made vacant. He would have won it then but for the Judge White votes from Tennessee. These were given to their own best man, Mr. Bell, and when all the Whig votes were also given him, Mr. Bell was elected. It was a very long step toward breaking up the old Democratic control of the President's own State.

Mr. Polk remained the leader of his party upon the floor of the House, and the Whig victory was barren enough. All its fruits were apparently lost when, in December, 1835, the Twenty-fourth Congress assembled and at once placed James K. Polk in the Speaker's chair, with a stout Jacksonian majority to sustain his rulings.

Honors had come fast indeed to the comparatively youthful member from Tennessee. So far as political power attaches to influence upon the course of legislation, he had become officially the second man in the nation. The first, with a wide interval between him and Mr. Polk, was Andrew Jackson, and the unofficial power, purely representative and personal, was Henry Clay.

The Andrew Jackson Administration seemed at last to have triumphed over all its adversaries, and a sort of party celebration was in order. January

8th, 1835, the anniversary of the battle of New Orleans, was selected for the occasion, and a grand public banquet was given to General Jackson, rather than to the President, in the city of Washington. It was presided over by Colonel Benton, his representative in the Senate, and a distinguished array of Vice-Presidents was headed by the name of his lieutenant in the House, James K. Polk. It was not such a dinner as he had cooked for his father and other hungry hunters, years before, among the primeval forests of Tennessee.

CHAPTER V.

*The Van Buren Campaign—Texan Independence—
The Anti-Slavery Movement—The Panic of 1837
—Mr. Polk thanked by the House—Close of his
Career in Congress.*

PRESIDENT JACKSON and all that part of the Democratic Party which obeyed him without asking too many questions began to make arrangements, early in the year 1835, for the nomination of Martin Van Buren to succeed the hero of New Orleans. There could be no question but that he had a first claim upon the support of the organization he had done so much to create, and whose difficult campaign affairs he had handled with such unsurpassed dexterity. There were important Democratic elements, however, especially at the South, which were opposed to Mr. Van Buren. The State rights men led by Calhoun and Tyler were his bitter enemies, and there were leading Democrats in the Southwest who declared their determination to repudiate him. If time were to be given for this disaffection to make itself felt, a Democratic National Convention might deem it wise to nominate some other man. The convention was therefore summoned a full year in advance, and met on May 10th, 1835. There were six hundred delegates, and they voted unanimously for Mr. Van Buren. They were

much less than unanimous in nominating Richard M. Johnson for Vice-President.

Mr. Polk took no part in the Baltimore Convention. He afterward declared his hearty assent to the action of his chief and party, but they were about to discover that even the voters of Tennessee had minds of their own.

Through the remainder of that year and the Winter Congressional session of 1835-36, the general course of legislation went on in the settled line of the policy of the Administration, and Speaker Polk was sustained by good majorities in the House ; but there was one notable occasion when the President owed his best support to one of his bitterest enemies.

The French Government owed the United States five millions of dollars of indemnity money, under a treaty concluded in 1831. Repeated and continued neglect to pay on the French side, and characteristically-firm remonstrances on the part of President Jackson, at last brought the relations between the two nations to such a pass that war seemed inevitable. The American Minister, Mr. Livingston, received his passports and came home, and the President sent a message to Congress announcing that France was preparing a fleet for American waters, and urging "large and speedy preparations for the increase of the navy and the completion of our coast defences."

The Senate did not waver seriously, but the House of Representatives seemed for a moment to lose its nerve. It was not ready for war, and the

Administration majority was crumbling in all directions, when old John Quincy Adams came to Mr. Polk's assistance in a defence of the President so eloquent, so patriotic, so warlike, that he rallied men of all parties in a solid vote sustaining the Administration. It was a grand thing for him to do, since he represented upon that floor the growing opposition to nearly all the measures and policy to which the President and the Speaker were committed. He was an anti-slavery man ; for that avowed reason opposed to the annexation of Texas, vigilantly watching and vehemently denouncing every step which the Democratic Party was taking in that direction. It professed not to have yet taken any, as a party, but its annexation wing had aided the Texas revolutionists materially. The latter had progressed well. Their declared independence had been recognized by European powers, and the resolution for its recognition by the United States had been no party measure. Henry Clay himself, on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Relations, had introduced it in the Senate in June, 1836, with an expression of prudent doubt whether the right time for it had arrived.

The Presidential campaign of 1836 fully justified the precaution taken by Mr. Van Buren's friends in beginning it early. There was an independent Democratic ticket in the field, after all, for Judge White refused to be bound by the action of the convention, and John Tyler joined him with a strong following of strict Construction, State rights men. Mr. Polk went home to Tennessee and made a gal-

lant fight to save the State, but there had been a widespread and unlooked-for rebellion. His efforts were all in vain, and the best he could do was to save his own seat in Congress. The Duck River pioneers stood by him, but the State of Tennessee went for White and Tyler. So did Georgia, while Maryland and South Carolina dropped Judge White and voted, the former for Harrison and the latter for Willie P. Mangum. Colonel Johnson failed of an election by the people, and afterward received one from the Senate. Mr. Van Buren obtained one hundred and seventy votes, and was elected ; but Harrison and Granger had seventy-three, a notable increase, and Daniel Webster received fourteen. The twenty-six votes of Judge White, and the eleven of Mr. Mangum, however, were nearly all given by men who could be relied upon as sincere Democrats in any contest involving the protection of slavery, territorial extension generally, or the annexation of Texas in particular.

Mr. Polk returned to his duties as Speaker of the House, and the stormy administration of Andrew Jackson drew on toward its close. The Winter session of 1836-37 was made memorable in the history of American politics by the action of the House in adopting what was afterward known as "the gag rule." It was a vain attempt to check an annoying stream of petitions, generally presented by John Quincy Adams, relating to the abolition of slavery. On January 18th a resolution was adopted, by a vote of one hundred and thirty-nine to sixty-nine, "that all petitions relating to slavery, without being

printed or referred, shall be laid on the table, and no action shall be had thereon." A disagreeable subject was to be avoided by a denial of the right of petition, and a great impetus was at once given to the anti-slavery movement. The Abolition societies were two thousand in number before the close of 1838, and their rejected petitions to Congress bore three hundred thousand names. The position of Mr. Polk and the Southern wing of the Democratic Party, which he represented at least as perfectly as did any other man, had received a very distinct and peculiarly unpopular definition.

Mr. Van Buren was inaugurated on March 4th, 1837, and the Texas question was almost immediately brought before him. He was called upon by Mr. Memucan Hunt, envoy of Texas to the United States, with a proposal for annexation, although it was as yet by no means certain that the Gulf Republic, as its friends called it, would succeed in establishing its independence. Mr. Van Buren declined taking any favorable action, on the declared ground that a state of war existed between Texas and Mexico, a power with which the United States were at peace, and that the proposal was really that the United States should assume and carry on the war. A large majority in Congress was known to be in perfect accord with him, and the friends of annexation were forced to bide their time.

The people of the United States had more than enough to occupy their minds at home during the year 1837. There had been financial disturbances

in Europe during 1836, and their effect began to be felt in this country during the Autumn and Winter. With the Spring began what has ever since been known as the Panic of 1837. From its outset the commercial classes charged it upon the asserted errors of Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, and the other leaders of the Democratic Party. On May 3d a committee of New York merchants and bankers waited upon the President and presented their indictment in due form. They said, among other severe things: "The error of our rulers has produced a wider destruction than the pestilence which depopulated our streets or the conflagration which laid them in ashes."

Mr. Van Buren responded with a very just refusal to accept such a verdict, but it was evident that if the voting masses should accept it there were dark clouds in the horizon of the Democratic Party. He had no power to stay the panic, and was wise in not making any hysterical attempt. One week later the banks of New York suspended payment, and all other banks rapidly followed their example. The Treasury itself was in trouble, and the President summoned a special session of Congress to provide means for meeting Government expenses. Upon the organization of the House of Representatives, September 4th, 1837, it was discovered that the Administration majority had almost melted away, for James K. Polk was chosen Speaker by a narrow margin of only three votes. He was chosen, nevertheless, and he performed his duty so well, in a time of uncommon perplexity, that when the session closed

men of all factions joined in giving him a unanimous vote of thanks.

Personally, he had been at all times popular, and his social position, admirably sustained by Mrs. Polk, had been an important element of strength during the arduous years of the Jackson Administration.

The Winter session came, and with it a renewal of the arduous duties of a party leader in troublous times presiding over a body which was at times all but tumultuous. Even his political enemies admitted that he made an admirable Speaker, considering the well-known strength of his partisanship. The session was prolonged, and one of its most exciting debates did not come until Summer. It continued from June 16th till July 7th, and was occasioned by a report of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs with reference to the proposed annexation of Texas. Every feature of the history of Texas and every probable consequence of annexation were exhaustively discussed, including the declaration of President Monroe that "our right to Texas is as good as our right to New Orleans." That had been uttered even while giving up all for the Florida treaty, and John Quincy Adams was given abundant opportunity to defend his share in the alleged surrender of an empire. He did so, with the addition of unstinted vituperation of an attempt to steal back again property once fairly parted with, whether profitably or not, and he left little to be said concerning the enormity of human slavery and of the denial of the right of petition.

The results of the debate convinced the annexationists that the country was not yet ready for war with Mexico, and that Mr. Adams was by no means alone in his hostility to the extension of slavery.

Changes in Congress and the results of the autumnal elections of 1838 served notice upon the leaders of all factions that a new political era was at hand. The Whig Party was known to be steadily absorbing the floating vote, and such men as John Tyler, of Virginia, were openly declaring their purpose of acting with it rather than permit Martin Van Buren to be again elected President. Mr. Tyler was already in the Virginia Legislature as a Whig when Congress came together in December, and the Massachusetts voters who had insisted upon throwing away their electors upon Daniel Webster in 1836 were now ready to abide by the decision of a regular Whig National Convention.

The Winter session of 1838-39 was full of important legislation, and Mr. Polk sustained his well-earned reputation. It was the fifth session over which he had presided. He had decided not to be a candidate for another term in Congress, and when the day of adjournment came it was agreed upon all sides that a sort of farewell address would be eminently appropriate. Not yet forty years of age, Mr. Polk was one of the oldest members of the House as to consecutive service, and his admitted leadership had begun at an early day. Political enemies were willing to listen almost as personal friends. The Speaker's address was a well-drawn retrospect

of the stirring scenes he had witnessed in that legislative chamber, joined with a most impressive and patriotic forecast of the national future. It was printed, was widely read, and it added materially to his reputation as an orator and statesman.

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Polk Governor of Tennessee—Rise of the Whig Party—President Harrison—Defeat of Mr. Polk for Governor—Tyler's Administration—James K. Polk elected President of the United States.

JAMES K. POLK had especial reasons for not desiring another election to the House of Representatives. There were good grounds for doubting the election of a Democratic Speaker by the next Congress, and his return would have been to a place among other men upon the floor. So far as mere personal ambition could be gratified by legislative honors, he had received them. He had served long and laboriously, and no man could say that he had not been utterly faithful to his avowed political principles. He had served his party well, and, as he understood the bearing of legislative measures, he had served the country well. He had been in Congress long enough, and now there was a necessity for a vigorous effort to save the State of Tennessee from falling altogether into the hands of the Whigs. It contained no Democrat more popular than James K. Polk, nor one better able to call out the utmost strength of the old Jackson party. He had therefore accepted in advance a nomination for Governor of the State, and went home to enter upon a toilsome and doubtful canvass.



PORTRAIT OF JAMES KNOX POLK.



There were many things which worked against a man who was loaded with all the memories of the Jackson-Van Buren Administration, with the panic of 1837, with the enmity of the Judge White interest, and with a proposed Mexican war ; but Mr. Polk faced all his adversaries manfully, addressing large gatherings of voters in all parts of the State, and once more proving himself a popular orator of extraordinary ability. He was elected, and it was called a triumph. So it was, considering how hardly it had been won, but a very moderate majority of twenty-five hundred over his competitor gave warning that the change in the political sentiment of Tennessee had been tremendous.

There was no doubt but that Mr. Polk would make an excellent Governor. He did so, and while in discharge of the duties of his office he enjoyed much more of home life than had been possible during his exciting years at Washington.

The Whig tide was swelling fast, and whatever President Van Buren may have been willing to do for the cause of annexation, the necessary power for effective action was not in his hands during the last year of his term of office. The Democratic Party lost control of the House of Representatives, losing it in a very remarkable manner. When the Twenty-sixth Congress met, on December 2d, 1839, the Clerk of the House of Representatives began to call the roll. When he reached the State of New Jersey he said that five seats of the members from that State were contested, and that, as he had no authority to decide the question involved, he would

pass over their names, proceed with the call, and leave the case for the action of the House when organized. That would have left a Democratic majority on the roll, with power to elect their own Speaker, and there was a tumult at once. During four days an excited, disorderly debate continued, until at last old John Quincy Adams took the matter in hand and proceeded to organize the House without reference to the technical objections of the Clerk. Eleven days more of strife and turmoil followed, with Mr. Adams in the chair, but at the end the Whigs succeeded in electing their candidate for Speaker, Hon. R. M. T. Hunter, of Virginia. That gave them the control of all the standing committees, and postponed, for the time being, every project of the annexationists.

All over the land preparations were making for the Presidential campaign of 1840. Mr. Van Buren believed himself entitled to a second term, and his party finally consented, with much murmuring, to give him a nomination. Some time before the meeting of the Democratic National Convention the Legislature of Tennessee adopted a resolution recommending James K. Polk as a candidate for Vice-President, but the managers of Mr. Van Buren's canvass deemed it wiser to renominate Colonel Johnson. Mr. Polk made no apparent effort on his own behalf. He proposed to act with his party and do his best, but there was no enthusiasm at the South, among Texas annexationists particularly, for Mr. Van Buren, a man who had, as they declared, turned a cold shoulder to the entire proj-

ect for territorial extension. The result was very much what might have been expected from a chilled and lifeless beginning.

The Whigs, on the other hand, encouraged by successes already won in nearly all of the States and in Congress, went into the battle with great energy. Before their National Convention assembled they had a considerable number of candidates, and several names were actually balloted for in the convention ; but they agreed heartily in naming General William Henry Harrison, as sound a Whig as Henry Clay, in favor of a United States Bank and of a protective tariff, and opposed to the annexation of Texas and a war with Mexico. They also, for supposed political reasons, nominated for Vice-President John Tyler, of Virginia, an old State rights Democrat, opposed to a protective tariff, doubtful on the bank question, and at heart in favor of an extension of territory, and of slavery with it. Without any knowledge or purpose on their part, or on that of Mr. Polk, they were providing for him a President of the United States who would serve as his own stepping-stone to the same high office.

The Democratic Party machinery worked as well as ever, for it was in the hands of its accustomed able managers. There was apparently as much of stump speaking and of all other forms of partisan activity as ever, but all that was done upon that side lacked the fire and force with which the Whigs fought their Log Cabin Campaign, for " Tippecanoe and Tyler too."

The victory was gained by the enthusiasm and

lost by the coldness. Harrison and Tyler were elected by a somewhat narrow majority as to numbers, but it gave them two hundred and thirty-four electoral votes against only sixty, and with these good working majorities in both Houses of Congress.

The Democratic Party had received a staggering blow, and its old leaders for a time almost lost heart. They did not know what was in store for them, and were so slow to realize it when it came that their party organs continued to abuse John Tyler long after he severed his temporary connection with the Whigs and was preparing for the Democracy a new victory and a new lease of power.

The rank and file of the party were also dispirited, and when, in 1841, General Harrison was inaugurated President of the United States, with a full Cabinet of Whig statesmen, a Whig Congress, and with two-thirds of the States under Whig control, it looked as if the political dream of Henry Clay rather than of James K. Polk had been finally realized.

Mr. Polk was now a private citizen. Even his popularity and eloquence had not prevented him from being swept away in defeat by the Whig wave of 1840. It had carried Tennessee by a majority of twelve thousand. He returned to his law practice, and speedily found it yielding him a better income than any he had ever enjoyed from his official positions and from the occasional law fees which he could earn in the intervals of public duties. He had become the owner of the former residence of Felix

Grundy, a fine mansion with extensive grounds, in the aristocratic quarter of Nashville, on what was known as Grundy's Hill, and he made it, with Mrs. Polk's assistance, a sort of social centre for all who were in any manner entitled to its liberal hospitalities. There was a wide difference, however, between the invitations extended from such a mansion and the unstinted welcome accorded to all who chose to visit the Hermitage. It was even asserted, detrimentally, that Mr. Polk had become a very aristocratic man to call himself a Democrat. The charge had its element of truth, and it might have been added that the social level of the Jackson and Polk families had never been the same, in Ireland or in America. Thomas and Ezekiel Polk had been leading men in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, when poor Widow Jackson, down in the Waxhaws, was working as a housekeeper that she might be able to feed and clothe her infant son. Samuel Polk, plain planter though he was, had been able to send his brilliant boy to the academy and the university, and to support him while studying law. More than that, it may be, lay in the fact that James K. Polk had wedded wealth and education and refinement, instead of a lady who, whatever her goodness of heart, liked nothing better of an evening than to sit on the opposite side of the fireplace and smoke a corn-cob pipe like that of her husband.

Startling news came to the ex-Speaker of the House in April, 1841. William Henry Harrison was dead, and John Tyler was President of the United States.

Mr. Polk knew Mr. Tyler, and must have been as well aware as was anybody else that there had been no Henry Clay Whiggism in him. He would not have expressed himself, however, in any such terms as were at once employed by hundreds of the men who had toiled and voted to make Mr. Tyler Vice-President. Old John Quincy Adams had a faculty for saying bitter things in the bitterest way. A part of what he now had to say was as follows :

“Tyler is a political sectarian, of the slave-driving, Virginia-Jeffersonian school ; principled against all improvement ; with all the interests and passions and vices of slavery rooted in his moral and political constitution. . . . Slavery, intemperance, land-jobbing, bankruptcy, and sundry controversies with Great Britain, constitute the materials for the history of John Tyler’s Administration.”

That was the anti-slavery view, and before long Whigs of all sorts were equalling Mr. Adams in the fierceness of their vituperation. On the other hand, statesmen like James K. Polk, equally well entitled to have decided opinions upon moral and political questions, including slavery itself, were able to at once express a hope of being delivered somewhat from the current excesses of Whig Party proscription, and even that Whig narrowness would not now be able to present so strong a barrier to that beneficial expansion of the great Republic which Mr. Adams had himself formerly advocated.

Mr. Polk was in due time to be as bitterly assailed as was Mr. Tyler, though for different reasons, and his opponents also were to put out of sight the facts of his political career, his public record, his private

integrity, as well as the truth that he was officially obeying the known will of the majority of the people.

Before the end of the Summer of 1841, Mr. Tyler was in open variance with the leaders of the Whig Party, but for a season afterward they seemed even to increase their political ascendancy in many States. One of these was Tennessee, for the interest there which had organized at first under Judge White and was afterward led by Mr. Bell remained solidly Whig.

Mr. Polk became more and more earnest in his advocacy of Texan annexation as time went on. Reports from Texas grew more and more favorable at the same time, and Mexico was distracted by internal commotions which consumed her strength. All her factions, however, seemed to be agreed upon one point, for each in turn avowed an unalterable determination to retain at least a nominal ownership of the revolted province. When the dictator, Santa Anna, in 1836, had been defeated and made a prisoner at San Jacinto, with a fair prospect of being shot for his many crimes, he had given a compulsory assent to Texan independence, but had had no idea of being bound afterward by his action while under duress, and his countrymen had no thought, then or afterward, of keeping his contract for him.

Mr. Polk made a great effort in 1843 to break the power of the Whig Party in Tennessee. He was again nominated for Governor, and made a thorough personal canvass of the State. There

were signs of a reaction in his favor, for he reduced the Whig majority to four thousand ; but he was defeated, and there were opponents who assured him that the remainder of his life would probably be devoted to the practice of law.

During all this time the administration of Mr. Tyler had not only become entirely Democratic, with John C. Calhoun, at last, as Secretary of State, to indicate the kind and intensity of its Democracy, but it had taken up the subject of annexation in a manner which made it the most prominent of all the issues between the two great parties.

There were even Democrats whom as yet it was necessary to persuade that the annexation of Texas did not mean a war with Mexico, and the Whig Party in Congress was able to prevent definite action, session after session, through a series of debates which made the entire country familiar with every phase of the subject. The newspaper press kept even pace with the debates in Congress, and whole bound volumes of arguments and statistics were printed. Everywhere the annexation advocates at the North were compelled to meet the increasing aggressiveness of anti-slavery men, while among the great mass who were comparatively indifferent to the slavery question a hungry greed was awakened for possessing the almost empty South-western wastes which seemed likely to remain useless forever under their Mexican ownership.

The year 1844 opened at last, and both parties prepared for an appeal to the people. Mr. Van Buren claimed that he had been defeated in 1840 by

sectional factions and by a depressed condition of the party now no longer existing. There were many who deemed him entitled to another trial, and more who believed him able to draw out a larger Northern vote than could be expected for another candidate. He was willing to pacify the annexationists, and wrote a letter declaring himself in favor of receiving Texas if it could be done without paying for it by a war with Mexico. That was by no means enough, however, and they had other reasons for doubts as to the course he might take in an emergency which they knew to be already prepared for the next President of the United States if a Democrat should be elected. Texas was already knocking for admission, bringing her war with her in the shape of a disputed boundary. Her national independence had already been formally acknowledged by the United States and by several European powers, but neither they nor Texas herself were yet able to say whether the southern line of the new State would finally be found at the Nueces River or at the Rio Grande, or what might be its western border.

The extreme Southern wing of the Democratic Party, through John C. Calhoun, loudly declared that Mr. Van Buren should not, under any circumstances, become the candidate of the Democratic Party. Mr. Tyler's friends emphasized the declaration by giving him, temporarily, an independent nomination, of which no more was heard after the one question dearest to them all was placed in safer keeping than that of Martin Van Buren. Neverthe-

less, when the Democratic National Convention met in Baltimore, May 27th, 1844, it was found that a majority of the party delegates had come there to nominate Mr. Van Buren.

There was a rule in existence, of which no use had ever yet been made, requiring a two-thirds vote of any such convention in order to complete a nomination. Up to that day there had been remarkable unanimity, but now there was a strong minority, somewhat larger than a third, which proposed to hold out forever rather than accept Mr. Van Buren. The majority was powerless, and for a time there seemed to be even peril of a ruinous division ; but the warmest supporters of the New York statesman were not prepared to give the election at once into the hands of Henry Clay.

The Whig National Convention had been also held in Baltimore on May 1st. It had declared against annexation and a war with Mexico, had nominated Henry Clay for President and Theodore Frelinghuysen for Vice-President, and had gone home rejoicing. There was a fallacious belief among the Whig delegates that John Tyler was to split the Democratic vote, and a faith, much better grounded, in the personal popularity of their candidate, and in the dislike for war entertained by a majority of the American people.

The fact that Henry Clay had been nominated, with a certainty of being elected if there should be any disagreement among themselves, solidified the Democratic Convention. It was determined to drop Mr. Van Buren and find a man, if they could,

against whom the North could bring no special objection, and whose name would receive the approval of the South.

Some time previous to the meeting of the convention much mention had been made of James K. Polk in connection with the party nomination for Vice-President. He had been invited to define his position upon some of the questions of the day, especially upon annexation. As to some others, his public record was amply sufficient. In reply he had said :

" I have no hesitation in declaring that I am in favor of the immediate re-annexation of Texas to the territory and government of the United States. I entertain no doubts as to the power or expediency of the re-annexation. The proof is fair and satisfactory, to my own mind, that Texas once constituted a part of the territory of the United States, the title to which I regard to have been as indisputable as that to any portion of our territory."

He added a detailed historical argument in defence of his position, and it was evident that he, at least, could be depended upon to take and hold whatever land he believed to have been paid for by President Jefferson when Napoleon sold the Louisiana territory.

In the first ballot of the Democratic Convention the name of Mr. Polk did not appear. He had not yet been thought of for President. As the ballots proceeded, however, and as the delegates from different sections discussed the list of statesmen from which they were to make their choice, they found themselves compelled to put aside man after man as unavailable. Objections made were of sev-

eral kinds, but Southern and Northern men alike agreed that it would be useless to put before the people any nominee who had ever been mixed up with State rights or Nullification, or of whose devotion to the Union there could be any question. On the other hand, John C. Calhoun himself cared very little now for the fact that Mr. Polk long years ago had carried the Force Bill through the House for Andrew Jackson.

After several ballots the choice of the convention settled itself unanimously upon James K. Polk, and even Martin Van Buren accepted, apparently but not really, the action of his party. He waited four years longer before he took a somewhat grotesque revenge upon the two-thirds rule and the Texas annexationists.

Mr. George M. Dallas, of Pennsylvania, received the nomination for Vice-President, a Texas annexation platform was agreed upon, and the convention adjourned.

The delegates had acted with wisdom and moderation under somewhat trying circumstances, but they had still a sure defeat before them if it had not been for one small body of exceedingly conscientious men in several of the Northern States where the Whig majorities were narrow. The extreme Abolitionists of the North had views of their own as to the right way of reaching a political end, and they had the courage of their convictions. Mr. Polk was an open advocate of the extension of the area of slavery, and of course they could not vote for him. The Whig Party was opposed to slavery extension,

but then it had nominated Henry Clay, a slaveholder, and the Abolitionists decided that it was best to nominate Mr. James G. Birney and Thomas Morris, and draw off in that way a sufficient number of anti-slavery Whig votes to elect Mr. Polk, annex Texas as a slave State, and have a war with Mexico. They succeeded in giving Mr. Birney sixty-two thousand two hundred and sixty-three votes, and the Democratic Party was deeply indebted to them, for it would otherwise have been many thousands in the minority. As it was, Mr. Polk received one hundred and seventy electoral votes, and Mr. Clay one hundred and five. Tennessee went for Clay, but Maury County gave Mr. Polk seven hundred majority. One other feature of the election, however, prevented it from being either a rout for the Whigs or a secure victory for the Democrats. The Congressional Whig nominations had largely escaped the effect of the Birney movement, and the new Administration majority there and in the Senate promised to be anything but compact and trustworthy

CHAPTER VII.

Mexican Treaties and Texan Independence—James Knox Polk, President of the United States—The Oregon Question—Position of Parties—General Taylor's Army at Corpus Christi.

So far as the Presidential election could be regarded as an expression of the popular will upon the subject, the people of the United States had decided in favor of annexing Texas, whatever might be the consequences of annexation. Prior to the rendering of that decision, the Whigs had been strong enough, both in House and Senate, to defeat any measure of even a preparatory nature. On April 12th, 1844, Mr. Calhoun, as Secretary of State, had signed a treaty of annexation, and it was laid before the Senate by Mr. Tyler. After a prolonged debate it received only fifteen votes, June 8th, and was rejected. The temper of Congress was again tested by offering on December 19th, 1844, a joint resolution providing for annexation. It was vigorously opposed, but was adopted on the 25th of the month. A treaty of annexation was soon presented for action, and it was evident that the power of the opposition had been broken. There were delays, of course, but on March 1st, 1845, the treaty was approved, and on the next day it was signed by President Tyler. He had in this manner made all

things ready for the hands of his successor, and he at once despatched a messenger to Texas to announce the action of the Government of the United States and call for corresponding legislation on the part of Texas.

The situation was singularly complicated. Great Britain herself was believed to have designs upon Texas, and much use had been made of that idea in the Presidential campaign, as well as in the despatches of the Secretary of State to the American Minister to France. The Mexican Government, as early as August 23d, 1843, had officially notified the Government of the United States, in view of the current discussion of the subject by the American press, that the passage by Congress of an act of annexation would be regarded by Mexico as equivalent to a declaration of war. This notification was formally repeated in November, 1843, and again on May 31st, 1844. On June 12th, 1844, President Santa Anna, while serving a similar notice upon the United States, had made a requisition upon the Mexican Congress for thirty thousand men and four millions of dollars for the prosecution of the war he threatened.

In the closing hours of Mr. Tyler's administration, while the treaty of annexation was before Congress, France and England were busily promoting a treaty of peace between Texas and Mexico. The treaty failed to determine a boundary line while containing an acknowledgment of Texan independence, but it also contained an express covenant that Texas should not be annexed to any other power.

France had defeated England, if that power really wanted Texas, and the two together, with Mexico, seemed to have defeated the United States, for the treaty was duly signed by the Texan representative, on March 29th, 1845, and was sent home for ratification. Before it was signed, however, and long before it could cross the Atlantic, there had been important changes in the situation.

On March 4th, 1845, James Knox Polk was inaugurated President of the United States, and his address left unsaid nothing that might have been wished for by the party which had elected him.

The position of parties in Congress was such that his influence over the course of general legislation threatened to be somewhat limited, but the electoral votes which made him President had accepted the responsibility and consequences of annexation, and he was sure of support in such measures as he might take for completing the work begun under Mr. Tyler. Whatever he might do would be under the daily inspection of an ably led, compact, and powerful political opposition, ready to make the most of every semblance of a blunder, and it was evident that without skilful management his administration was likely to meet with disasters.

The Cabinet selected by Mr. Polk was peculiarly strong. James Buchanan, of Pennsylvania, became Secretary of State ; Robert J. Walker, of Mississippi, Secretary of the Treasury ; William L. Marcy, of New York, Secretary of War ; George Bancroft, of Massachusetts, Secretary of the Navy ; Cave Johnson, of Tennessee, Postmaster-General, and

John Y. Mason, of Virginia, Attorney-General. They were able men, in full accord with the aggressive policy which Mr. Polk's administration must undertake, and the country waited anxiously for the news of the next step.

There was something like suspense for a while, although there were no intentional delays anywhere. The Mexican Minister, General Almonte, on March 6th entered his formal protest against the act of annexation, declaring that it proposed to sever from his country an integral part of her territory. At the same time he demanded his passports, in token of the cessation of diplomatic and friendly relations between the two republics. On April 2d the American Minister to Mexico was formally cut off from all diplomatic intercourse, and, on June 4th, 1845, the President of the Mexican Republic, General Herrera, issued a proclamation denouncing the act of annexation and calling upon his fellow-citizens to rally in defence of their national domain. He also began to gather armed forces upon the Rio Grande.

So far as troops were concerned, President Tyler had anticipated the Mexicans. Early in 1844 he had begun to concentrate the small force at his disposal at a point as near as might be to the Texas border. The Third and Fourth Infantry and the Second Dragoons were camped, in May, 1845, only about twenty-five miles from the Sabine River.

When that force finally broke camp and moved it went into Texas by way of New Orleans and the Gulf, and among its very younger officers was a second lieutenant named Ulysses S. Grant.

The routine work of Government went on in all the departments during the remainder of the year 1845, but the War Department and the Navy Department were especially busy. So far as existing appropriations of money would go, every man and every weapon and every ship was put in the best condition for use, while the officers, from General Winfield Scott, Commander-in-Chief, down to such young fellows as Captain Robert E. Lee and Lieutenant P. G. T. Beauregard and Lieutenant George B. McClellan, and others like them, brushed up their Spanish and their geography, and planned campaigns in Mexico as brilliant as that of Cortes.

There was a very curious political difficulty annoying the Democratic Party leaders from the beginning to the end of the war with Mexico. In the old days the regular army officers, successors of Washington's Continental Line, had been mostly Federalists, and now their successors in turn were Whigs, and any glory to be won would almost surely make some Whig general unduly and dangerously popular. There were men who declared that the President had a manifest duty upon him to give the chief command to some officer less distinctly opposed to the war itself than was General Scott, and perhaps to one less arbitrarily determined to have his own way. Whatever were the General's faults, however, personal or political, the President believed, as did everybody else, that no other man in America could handle an army nearly as well, and it was a plain duty to leave him in charge.

There were several formalities to be cared for

before the United States could have a legal right to land troops in Texas or march them over the border. On June 18th, 1845, both Houses of the Texan Congress, after rejecting the French-English-Mexican treaty, unanimously adopted joint resolutions of final consent and agreement to the act of annexation, and summoning a convention of the people. The convention was chosen at once and adopted an act of ratification on July 4th.

It was now time for the President of the United States and his army officers to do something more than to prepare and to watch, and all the people were in a state of suspense and excitement, while the anti-war men found abundant matter for continuous attacks upon the Administration.

There were civil commotions in Mexico, changes of rulers, collisions of factions, disorders everywhere, which paralyzed her for the time and made the few soldiers she could maintain upon the Rio Grande of no immediate use beyond that of a sort of picket guard. The American settlers in Texas were comparatively at their ease, so far as Mexico was concerned. The Comanches and Lipans and other Indian tribes gave them tenfold greater annoyance than did the threats of the new Mexican ruler, Paredes, or the occasional scouting parties of lancers who now and then crossed the Rio Grande, dashed forward for a look at the Nueces, and then dashed back again.

The Twenty-ninth Congress of the United States began its first session on December 1st, 1845. The message laid before it from President Polk was of

uncommon length, and dealt with affairs of the utmost national importance. The conduct of Mexico in the non-payment of claims as provided for by existing treaties, and with reference to many injuries inflicted upon American citizens, was set forth in strong language, and the subject of annexation received due attention. The tariff question was presented in a manner which led to the adoption by that Congress of the measures afterward known to American politics and commerce as "the tariff of 1846." The public lands, an independent Treasury system, and other matters of interest, were discussed as by a man who had been made familiar with them through long years of service in Congress. Hardly second to the Mexican War question itself was that of the Oregon boundary between the United States and Great Britain, and current diplomatic negotiations required that this also should receive the prompt attention of Congress. Rarely in the history of the country had an annual message contained more important matter or matter brought out in better shape for legislative action.

When Mr. Polk had been nominated for President there had been some Whigs willing to air their ignorance of American politics by derisively asking, "Who is Polk?" This message seemed to be a sufficient answer, and there was more to come. They had unwisely underestimated a strong and experienced antagonist. The man who had been Andrew Jackson's lieutenant in the House of Representatives, who had long been Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, twice Speaker of

the House, and once Governor of Tennessee, was not altogether an obscure individual.

The first and most pressing demand for Congressional action was also presented in a separate message, setting forth the action of the Texas Congress and convention, and the hostile attitude of the Mexican Government, or, rather, successive governments. In both Senate and House there were Whigs who had not yielded one hair's breadth of their opposition, and they made one more hopeless fight; but there were also Whigs who declared that the act of annexation was now that of the nation and not of a party, and were ready to sustain Mr. Polk. On December 16th a joint resolution formally admitting Texas as a State of the Union passed both Houses of Congress by a two-thirds vote. The great question now remaining unsettled seemed to be as to precisely what was Texas and how much Southwestern land, prairie, and forest had been admitted to the protection of the American flag.

All men knew that the interior boundary line must be hunted up at some future day away back among the Comanches and the yet unexplored mountain ranges. No Frenchman or Spaniard or Mexican had ever seen it or made a map of it, but it was there, and could be found.

Upon the Gulf of Mexico the case was somewhat different. The Texan Republic would have been at one time pretty well satisfied with a southern boundary at the Nueces River, declared by Mexican authorities to have been the southern boundary

of the Mexican State of Texas. President Polk, however, and those who agreed with him, went back to the ancient claims of the French kings, and declared that the Texas admitted to the Union was the same which had been sold by Napoleon and lost again by the ill-advised Florida treaty of 1819. The region lying between the Rio Grande and the Nueces was therefore, at the present moment, old territory of the United States recently recovered, and an American army could lawfully be sent to take possession of it. The Whigs in Congress and all the Whig press of the country poured unstinted derision and condemnation upon the President's arguments and conclusions, but he sent orders to Whig generals and was obeyed, nevertheless.

The most important of these orders had been issued to Colonel and Brevet-Brigadier-General Zachary Taylor, and directed him to gather an army of occupation at Corpus Christi, Texas, near the mouth of the Nueces River. Five regiments of infantry, one of cavalry, and four companies of light artillery, about three thousand men all told, made up the force with which he was to assert the old French claim, the rights ceded to Texas by Santa Anna, under pain of being shot if he refused, and the new title of the United States.

General Taylor had landed all his men at Corpus Christi by the time—December, 1845—of the passage by Congress of the act by which Texas was admitted to the Union. Her annexation had been completed on July 4th, previous, however, and General Taylor could regard any Texas land as part of the United

States. He had orders sent him now which did not permit him to remain at the mouth of the Nueces. No Mexican troops were likely to assail him there, for his presence did not seem to set up an armed claim to the disputed territory. He was therefore ordered to advance to the Rio Grande, about a hundred and fifty miles from Corpus Christi, and by the middle of March, 1846, he was encamped on the bank of that river opposite the Mexican town and fort of Matamoras.

CHAPTER VIII.

*The Oregon Boundary—Fifty-four Forty or Fight—
Battles in Texas—Taylor Crossing the Rio Grande
—Plans of the Administration—The Wilmot Pro-
viso.*

SUCH rights as old powers may acquire in new countries by virtue of prior discovery and occupation are liable to many disputes. Under such a supposed right Spain at one time claimed the entire Western coast of the continent of North America, including Oregon and a dim region north of it. Great Britain also declared a claim, by virtue of discovery and settlement, to territory which she now holds and to Oregon. The United States claimed the Columbia River country and an undefined domain northerly, southerly, and eastward to Lake Superior. One part of the asserted right of Spain was released in her treaties with England, and another, that to Oregon, by the same treaty of 1819 with the United States, which, in Mr. Polk's opinion, purchased Florida and gave away Texas. The rights asserted by Great Britain and the United States, who now held a sort of joint occupation of the disputed territory, had been cloudy from the beginning, and there had been many diplomatic discussions, in which neither power could exhibit a respectable reason for one boundary line rather than another. The treaty of 1819 placed the Americans

in a better position than they had had before, but three years later, when Lord Ashburton and Daniel Webster were arranging the treaty which defined the Northeastern boundary, they avoided any complications which might have arisen from meddling with the doubtful Northwest. Meantime many American immigrants and a few British were settling in Oregon, and President Tyler opened negotiations with the British Government, August 23d, 1844, "with a view to establish a permanent boundary between the two countries, westward of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean."

Secretary of State Calhoun was able to do no more than make a beginning, but the Democratic National Convention of 1844, which nominated Mr. Polk, adopted a patriotic resolution affirming the American title to Oregon.

James Buchanan was now Secretary of State, and promptly took up the important business left unfinished by the Tyler Administration. He proposed, by direction of President Polk, that England should accept a compromise. Her line should run along the forty-ninth parallel to the sea, with free use of ports on the shore of Vancouver's Island. This was declared to be the ultimatum of the United States, but the British Minister, Mr. Pakenham, rejected it without even referring it to his own Government. President Polk at once withdrew all offer of compromise, returned to the widest form of the old American claim, the newspapers took the matter up, and the whole country echoed with a somewhat absurd cry of "fifty-four forty or fight."

This was the condition of affairs when Congress listened to the President's Message in December, 1845. His recommendation was that a resolution should be adopted giving notice to Great Britain that the joint occupation of the disputed territory would be terminated at the expiration of one year. Both Houses were in a mood to comply, and the required resolution was adopted by a more than two-thirds vote.

Great Britain now took up the offer previously rejected and proposed, May 18th, 1846, that the boundary should be adjusted on the forty-ninth parallel. The offer reached the President on June 6th, and he sent to the Senate a message which indicated an inclination to reject it and try to obtain something better. The Senate, however, had a full-grown war upon its hands just then, and was averse to additional complications. By a vote of forty-one to fourteen the President was advised to conclude the treaty as Great Britain offered it. He did so, and it was duly ratified on June 15th, 1846.

One boundary line of the United States was forever settled by the treaty with England, and all popular effervescence connected with "fifty-four forty or fight" was lost in the vastly greater excitement caused by reports which came from the South concerning what General Taylor was doing for the settlement of the line under his protection.

Shortly after his arrival upon the Rio Grande he began the construction of a fort, in token of permanent American occupation. The fort was on land which President Polk fully believed to belong

to the United States, but every Mexican and nearly all the Whigs in the United States firmly asserted that it had never been French, nor a part of Texas. Besides, the Texan treaty negotiated for her having been rejected, Mexico had never acknowledged Texan independence, and all Mexican statesmen, with such American lawyers as Daniel Webster and Henry Clay, and all who stood with them, declared that there should have been no armed occupation of a disputed territory while negotiations for a peaceful settlement were in progress. There were law points in favor of the Mexicans, which might, perhaps, have been seen more clearly by President Polk if, instead of such troops as those of Arista and Ampudia, there had been a division or two of French or British or Germans camped along the Rio Grande. Such is the case in nearly all great controversies between nations, and the previous repeated threats of Mexico, with the fact that a war existed between her and that part of the United States which had recently been the nearly independent republic of Texas, seemed to be additional sanction for the immediate employment of force. The President deemed it his duty to supplement by the right of occupation such rights as were otherwise derived, since possession counts for much in any dispute concerning the title to real estate. He had been mentally prepared, from even before his unexpected nomination by the Democratic Party, to assert and defend the uttermost interpretation of the old French claim. He had for so long a time regarded a war with Mexico as a matter of course and in-

evitable, that he was almost taking its actual existence for granted. He and many others with him were already considering such further advantages, in addition to the acquisition of Texas, as might be gained for the United States by decisive success in the prosecution of the war.

General Ampudia, in command of the Mexican force at Matamoras, protested vigorously against the presence of the American army and the construction of Fort Brown. On April 11th, 1846, he sent to General Taylor a formal demand that all American troops should be withdrawn beyond the Nueces. It was as if he admitted that the Texas difficulty between the two republics was now become one of boundaries only, but General Taylor declined entering into any discussion of international questions or to remove his camp.

He was compelled to move, nevertheless. Moderate re-enforcements had reached him before leaving Corpus Christi, but he had been unable to bring with him provisions for the prolonged subsistence of so many men. Detachments of Mexican cavalry were now operating north of the Rio Grande and threatening his communications with his base of supplies. This was at Point Isabel, on the Gulf, twenty-five miles away. In the latter part of April the fort was finished, and was named Fort Brown; the Seventh Infantry was left to defend it, under command of Major Jacob Brown, and the remainder of the army marched to Point Isabel for supplies. When General Taylor left Fort Brown it was known that a considerable Mexican force had arrived to

strengthen Ampudia on the other side of the river. Also that two scouting parties of American cavalry had been captured on what the President would have called their own ground ; but there had been no indications of any probable immediate attempt to drive out the army of occupation.

There were supply ships arriving off Point Isabel, but there was no harbor, and everything had to be tediously boated ashore. It was May 7th before the army trains were loaded and the return march to Fort Brown could begin. The General had his forebodings of trouble to come, and the troops were pushed a little. Early on the morning of May 8th, as the advance approached a place known as Palo Alto, or the Tall Woods, they found themselves confronted by a body of Mexican troops, of all arms, largely exceeding in number those under General Taylor. There was no hesitation on either side, for the enemy opened fire at once, while the Americans formed in line of battle and moved steadily forward. Pretty sharp skirmishing followed, in which the American loss was nine killed and forty-five wounded. The Mexicans retreated, and the newspapers glorified the affair as the battle of Palo Alto. General Taylor advanced again on the 9th, and met with more serious resistance at Resaca de la Palma. It was something like a battle, but the Mexicans were again defeated, and the garrison of Fort Brown were relieved from the pressure of a siege. They had lost their commander, Major Brown, but had suffered only a few other casualties. The Mexican force beaten at Palo Alto and at Resaca

de la Palma retreated across the Rio Grande, and the American army of occupation seemed to have accomplished its precise destination—that of defending President Polk's declaration that the Rio Grande had been the rightful boundary of the old Mexican State of Texas, now a part of the territory of the United States.

The real purposes of the war with Mexico, however, had not yet been unfolded. The President was entirely ready for the news of the fighting, and had never doubted its result. In the very moment of the stirring announcement, May 11th, 1846, he sent to Congress, then in session, a special war message, in which he declared that Mexico, without reference to pending negotiations, had “at last invaded our territory and shed the blood of our citizens on our own soil.”

There were Whigs in Congress who eloquently responded that an invading American army had wickedly shed the blood of patriotic Mexicans upon their own soil; but the time for discussing that question had already gone by. Congressmen who persisted in denouncing the war, even while they voted for supplies of money and of men to carry it on, thereby doomed themselves to sure defeat at the next election and to retirement from political life for a long time afterward. Among those who deliberately did so during the following year was the one Whig member from the Democratic State of Illinois. His name was Abraham Lincoln, and that was his first and last appearance in the Congress of the United States.

War with Mexico was declared in due form, and an act was passed giving the President fifty thousand men and ten millions of dollars to carry it on with. That is, if his fifty thousand men had been already in the field, fully equipped, he was provided with about enough money to keep them there two months ; but then Congress knew very little about war, and the Whigs were vigilantly watching the expenditures.

The suggestion made by the President in his message was embodied in the act voting him his men and money, for it began with : " Whereas, by the act of the Republic of Mexico, war exists between that Government and the United States, Be it enacted, etc."

The whole country rang with warlike preparations, but for various reasons no very large re-enforcements were at once sent to General Taylor. One reason was that President Polk did not believe that Mexico would long carry on a war at all. He even attempted, in July, to open negotiations for peace, but failed entirely. He was every way willing to try again, since in case of a diplomatic success the further aim of the political campaign of 1844, the wider dream of the annexationists, might be reached at once. Territories of indefinite extent, lying beyond any boundaries which could be assigned to Texas, might be obtained in the course of peace negotiations. On August 10th, 1846, therefore, the President requested of Congress the needful authority and funds for the accomplishment of a result so manifestly desirable, in case opportunity should offer.

Up to that day the annexation victory of 1844 had apparently been without blemish. There had been no reverse, no check. Texas had been admitted, with slavery, and the Mexicans had been forcibly ejected from the disputed Rio Grande country. General Taylor and his army had now crossed that river and were preparing for a further advance, with no Mexican army in front of them. The nation seemed to have changed its tone with reference to the war, and to be enthusiastically listening for news of yet other victories, more magnificent than that of Palo Alto. There was a dark cloud rising, nevertheless, full of all the political difficulties and storms of the future.

President Polk's reasonable request was referred to the proper committee, and a bill was reported giving him as much authority as he required, with thirty thousand dollars for preliminary expenses, and three millions more to be used at his discretion.

Another committee had been in session at the same time, made up of anti-slavery Whigs, and they also had a bill to report.

Mexico had abolished slavery about twenty years earlier, but her laws had been set aside in the case of Texas by the American emigrants, who had at last succeeded in becoming once more citizens of the United States, bringing their slaves with them. Such additional territory as President Polk expressed a purpose of acquiring was as yet free soil under the Mexican law prohibiting slavery. It might naturally be supposed to remain such, the

Mexican law not being abrogated by express terms in any treaty of annexation ; but John C. Calhoun had long ago announced a doctrine of constitutional interpretation which was understood to be accepted by Mr. Polk and the annexationists, and which required explanation with reference to the case in hand. According to Mr. Calhoun, the Constitution of the United States carried slavery with it into all United States territory from which it was not expressly excluded by positive law. Enough had been said and done to show that in the will and understanding of the party in power, the old Mexican law would be regarded as rendered null and void by the treaty of annexation, and that the Calhoun doctrine would be made to apply. No power could then prevent the extension of slavery, for the new regions would all lie south of the prevention line provided for in the Missouri Compromise. So reasoned the self-appointed Whig committee, and they prepared their part of the proposed bill as follows :

“Provided, That, as an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico, by the United States, by virtue of any treaty that may be negotiated between them, and to the use by the Executive of the moneys herein appropriated, neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory, except for crime whereof the party shall be duly convicted.”

The work of the Whig committee was presented in the House of Representatives by David Wilmot, of Pennsylvania, and became famous in American

political history as the Wilmot Proviso. A very large number of candidates for office afterward gained or lost their elections by replying to the question of whether or not they were in favor of its adoption.

CHAPTER IX.

The Wilmot Proviso Again—General Scott and his Plans—Buena Vista—Scott's March to the City of Mexico—The Treaty of Peace—Election of President Taylor—Death of Mr. Polk.

THE history of the United States grew very rapidly during the year 1846. The bill giving the President authority and money for his proposed negotiations passed the House of Representatives loaded with the Wilmot Proviso, but when it reached the Senate there seemed a lack of interest in its fate, and it was permitted to die with the adjournment of that body.

On August 3d the President vetoed a river and harbor appropriation bill because it partook too much of the nature of a measure for internal improvements by the Federal Government.

During the Summer nearly twenty thousand men were enlisted for the war with Mexico, and most of them were speedily on their way to active service. General Taylor was re-enforced, and could go deeper into Mexico. On September 24th he stormed and captured the fortified Mexican town of Monterey, although it was defended by a force superior in numbers to his own, and there were signs that at least one Whig general was obtaining fame and popularity which might make him of political importance.

A detachment of troops under Generals Worth and Kearney overran New Mexico, while what could hardly be described as a detachment, under Captain John C. Frémont, conquered and held California.

When the Thirtieth Congress organized for business, in December, 1847, the Senate was Democratic, while the House was Whig, with a Whig Speaker. Antagonisms between the two were to be expected, but they were jointly pretty sure to give a sufficient support to an Administration which was able to report important successes in all directions.

The message of President Polk contained a review of the military situation, and proposed that the nation should demand of Mexico "indemnity for the past and security for the future." There were other recommendations of several kinds, and the request for authority and money for peace negotiations was renewed.

The lost bill for the latter purpose was once more brought forward in the House, and was again passed with the Wilmot Proviso. The Senate took it up and passed it, but struck out the obnoxious amendment, sending the whole matter back to the House. There was a sharp struggle, but New Mexico and California were already in American hands, and it would not do to run any risk of losing them. The Whigs yielded the point, and passed the bill without the proviso, contenting themselves by attaching that restriction to the act relating to the Oregon treaty. Perhaps even Mr. Calhoun would have assented to a rule which might prevent slavery or

cotton-growing in the Columbia River country. At all events, the political victory of Mr. Polk's administration over the anti-slavery opposition was complete. He had earnestly deprecated agitation of the slavery question in Congress, and had urged, without immediate success, that temporary civil governments should be provided for California and New Mexico.

There were to be several important occurrences before President Polk could exercise any part of the powers given him by the Peace Negotiations Bill. He had wisely declared from the beginning that the surest and most profitable peace was to be attained only at the end of successful military operations, but there had been a division of counsels as to what should be the nature of these and by whom they should be conducted.

So far as California and New Mexico were concerned, much perplexity had already been removed, but the best military authorities were almost unanimous in declaring that General Taylor's army of occupation, now become an army of invasion, could not wisely be ordered to march across country to the city of Mexico.

General Scott had advised, when officially called upon for his opinion, that the Mexican capital must be reached from the port of Vera Cruz, following, in part at least, the old pathway of Hernando Cortes. His plans, when brought before the Cabinet, May 27th, 1846, were disapproved, and there was shortly something like an open rupture between the General and the President. The blame could not be

laid entirely upon the latter by any man at all acquainted with the brilliant Commander-in-Chief, but the fact that an effort was afterward made to give the command to Colonel Thomas H. Benton instead, clearly confessed political as well as personal reasons for desiring Scott's retirement.

After many very unpleasant things had been said in Congress and in the newspapers, General Scott was permitted to remain in command, and to carry out his own plans in his own way. He pushed his preparations with vigor, and was ready, near the close of 1846, for an invasion of Mexico by way of Vera Cruz. In December he was on the Rio Grande in person, intending to prevent any further forward movement upon that line ; but General Taylor was already in the interior, beyond immediate recall. Before he could be ordered back he had met a Mexican army under Santa Anna, and several times larger than his own, had fought with it, February 22d, 23d, and 24th, 1847, at Buena Vista, and had routed it thoroughly, thereby providing the Whigs with a popular and available Presidential candidate rather than adding greatly to the strength of Mr. Polk's administration.

Meantime a fleet and an army, about twelve thousand men, had been given to General Scott. He had asked for more troops, but was willing to go forward with what he had. On March 9th, 1847, a landing was effected near Vera Cruz, siege operations begun, and on the 27th the fort and town were surrendered.

The plans of General Scott were carried out from

step to step with marvellous accuracy. Battle after battle was fought and won, somewhat as if his own troops and those of the enemy were chessmen whose powers he knew, and as if the mountain ranges and valleys and roads and all the fortifications in his way were only so many parts of a problem which he had solved before he began to move his pieces. Before the middle of September, 1847, the city of Mexico was captured, and no organized army remained in any part of the seemingly ruined republic.

What was almost equally important to President Polk and to the people of the United States, was the fact that there was for a time no responsible government left in Mexico with which a binding treaty of peace could be concluded.

Mr. Trist, an agent of the State Department, had accompanied the later movements of the army, and his attempts to negotiate were said to have even interfered with military operations; but after the capture of the city of Mexico they were continued under especial difficulties.

The American army remained upon the soil it had in a manner conquered but did not wish to keep, while an almost new Mexican Government took form and prepared to discuss terms of peace. When these were agreed upon the utmost hopes of the annexation party seemed to be more than realized. Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California remained in the possession of the United States upon payment of about fifteen millions of dollars and some other similarly trifling considerations.

The treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed in Mexico on February 2d, 1848, was approved by the United States on March 10th, following, and the war with Mexico was over.

The history of constitutional government hardly furnishes a parallel to the course of political parties in the United States during the latter part of the Polk Administration. A great political party, the Democratic, triumphantly carried out its declared policy under the direction of its chosen leader. A war for territorial aggrandizement was conducted with perfect success. At the same time an opposing party, the Whig, questioning all the successes won and condemning them upon moral grounds only, steadily increased its power until it became almost the voice of the nation. The Wilmot Proviso was only nominally and temporarily detached from the results of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Not one acre of ground beyond the boundaries finally assigned to Texas ever became part of a slave-holding State.

The troops of the United States began to return home as soon as peace was declared. The city of Mexico was evacuated in June. The remainder of the year supplied the Administration with multitudinous duties pertaining to the restoration of the national affairs to a peace basis. This included the local appointments and general regulation of the vast territory other than Texas which had become part of the United States. It was a period of severe toil and great anxiety to Mr. Polk, and he devoted himself to the discharge of his duties with an inten-

sity of application which made serious although not externally perceptible inroads upon a constitution which had never been strong. The course of political events added more than a little to the annoyances of his position, for before the end of the year it was manifest that all the magnificent results of the policy of annexation were to be turned over to the hands of its enemies.

The Democratic National Convention was summoned to meet at Baltimore on May 22d, 1848. There were elements within the Democratic Party which were known to be opposed to according to Mr. Polk a second term, but a nomination could in all probability have been obtained for him if such had been his desire. More than any other man, he was the representative, in the minds of the people, of the ideas and policy of the Democratic Party, as expressed by the National Convention of 1844, and there might have been political wisdom in asking a popular verdict upon his administration if that could have been done.

His own positive refusal to accept of a nomination, even should one be offered him, deprived his party of any possible advantage, and relieved some of its more timid leaders of any responsibility. In a letter to his personal friend, Dr. J. G. M. Ramsey, May 19th, 1848, Mr. Polk definitely refused to permit his name to come before the convention. Whatever other reasons he may have had or offered, the truth was that he was tired out and felt an imperative need of rest.

The convention met upon the day appointed, and

the Wilmot Proviso came also in the persons of a conflicting delegation from New York, who formally withdrew, went home, and aided Martin Van Buren in organizing the Free-Soil movement in that State, which destroyed the Democratic majority in 1848 precisely as the Birney movement had destroyed that of Clay in 1844.

The Baltimore Convention seemed almost to avoid the Mexican War in its nominations, although not in its platform, for Lewis Cass for President, and Senator Butler for Vice-President, were names without any known military association. On the other hand, the Whig Party put aside all its old-time leaders and nominated General Zachary Taylor for President, with Millard Fillmore, of New York, for Vice-President.

It was the old story of American Presidential elections. The battle of New Orleans elected one President, that of Tippecanoe another, and now the hard fight at Buena Vista added thousands of very-much-needed votes to the Whig electoral tickets. General Taylor was elected, but there were many who declared that he could not have been if the name of Mr. Polk had been presented instead of that of Mr. Cass.

Congress assembled for the Winter session as usual, but it had new questions before it. There was difficulty in obtaining proper legislation upon the ordinary routine requirements of the National Government. All measures for the management of the newly-acquired domain were examined with reference to their bearing upon the question of

slavery extension, and all men nominated to official positions were inquired of as to the Calhoun doctrine and the Wilmot Proviso. Patriotic men, Mr. Polk being very outspokenly of the number, deplored the intensity of sectional animosity developed. They saw and declared that the peace of the nation and the permanency of the Union were placed in imminent peril, and they strove in vain to allay the growing tumult. The administration of Mr. Polk expired after a session in which hardly any measures of importance had been brought to a conclusion by Congress, and the nation seemed to draw a breath of relief when the day of final adjournment came.

President Taylor was inaugurated on March 4th, 1849, and Mr. Polk rode with him in the carriage which conveyed him to the Capitol to take the oath of office. It was heartily declared, at the time, that never had a retiring President acted with greater courtesy and dignity in making way for his chosen successor. There were, indeed, several decidedly unpleasant memories connected with other changes of office and of party domination.

As President, and, to some extent, even as a leader of his own party, Mr. Polk's political career was over. The Whig Party had formally declared that the same was true of Henry Clay, and the reason was the same. Their work was done. That Mr. Polk had performed his appointed task with excellent ability and sincere patriotism can be understood better now than in the fiercely excited days just after the Mexican War.

Even then the severe criticisms made upon him came from only one section, and from barely a majority of the people of that section. Hardly any came from the South, and the encomiums heaped upon him by his fellow-citizens in that section and by many tongues at the North went far to compensate him for the strictly partisan condemnation which attached to his policy rather than to defects in his personal conduct. He had never been a traveller. He had seen comparatively a small part only of the country which had made him its Chief Magistrate, and he determined to take his own time and method of getting back to Nashville.

He went from Washington to Richmond, Virginia, where he was received with legislative honors. From that point southward his journey was everywhere attended with enthusiastic demonstrations of popular respect and appreciation. The North Carolina people were proud of the fact that he had been born among them ; the State University, of which he was a graduate, had made him a Doctor of Laws in 1847, and now all the people seemed ready to gather and tell him that they approved of his administration, although there was a dangerously large Whig vote in North Carolina. Their enthusiasm was more than rivalled by that of South Carolina and Georgia, and the ex-President found similar greetings awaiting him all the way to New Orleans. Here, after a grand reception, he took passage up the river, and reached his home at Nashville early in May, 1849.

Mr. Polk was but fifty-four years old—a very

young man to have so remarkable a career behind him. Men who saw him after his return to Nashville said that he seemed to be in vigorous health and to show no sign of age except in his flowing gray hair. He was but little above the middle height, but his form was spare, and he seemed taller. He was still unbent, and his graceful, kindly manners had always been a noted characteristic. Even the opposition press had unsuccessfully tried to make a point of them as indicating a too studied attempt to please. If being an aristocrat was intended to mean that he was lacking in consideration for plain people, all the settlers along Duck River could have answered any such calumny. They knew him, and they had a sort of kinship affection for him which they witnessed whenever an opportunity offered, at the polls or elsewhere.

There had never been any children in the household of the ex-President, but he had adopted a son of his brother, Marshall Polk. Except for this lack the mansion on Grundy's Hill, the ample fortune, the social position, the public honor, the long success in political life, the troops of friends, appeared like a wonderful harvest to have been gathered by the boy who was considered hardly strong enough to make his own way in the world, and who had begun it by a surveyor's camp fire in the wilderness of Tennessee.

The career of James K. Polk was more nearly and more entirely at an end than he or others imagined. His vitality had been lowered by the fatigues of the Executive office, and he had for years

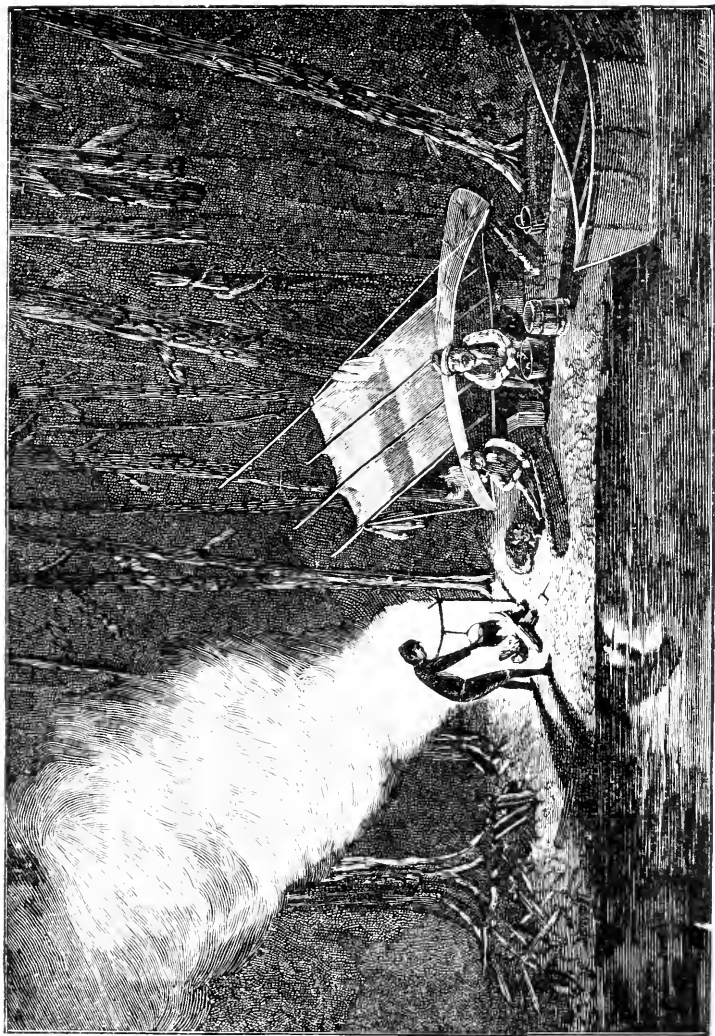
suffered occasionally from the effects of malarial poisoning. These now returned upon him, but not, at first, in a manner that seemed alarming. It was, however, "the cholera year," and many disorders assumed a more than commonly virulent form. That of Mr. Polk confined him to his bed at last; it would but be for a few days, they said. The days went by, and each found him more and more feeble, until, June 15th, 1849, the unexpected end came.

Mr. Polk had always been a professed believer in Christian doctrine, although not a church member. In his last illness he received baptism at the hands of a Methodist minister, an old personal friend. No man ever questioned his private morality or integrity. He left behind him a record as a statesman which for a long time prevented those who had voted against him from doing justice to either his ability or his patriotism. That time has forever gone by, and the North and South alike can honor the memory of the annexation leader, the Duck River farmer's boy who became President of the United States.









YOUNG POLK AS COOK AT HIS FATHER'S CAMP.—See Page 7.

